UNIVERSITY OF
ILLINOIS LIBRARY
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
STACKS

MELCHIOR GORLES.

VOL. III.

MELCHIOR GORLES.

A Tale

OF MODERN MESMERISM.

BY

HENRY AITCHENBIE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, PICCADILLY.
1867.

[*All rights reserved.*]

823
Ai 9m
v. 3

CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	AWAKE! AWAKE! ARISE!	1
II.	SETTLED BY DEATH	9
III.	CONSCIUS AUDACIS FACTI	23
IV.	ECCE ITERUM!	30
V.	COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOW BEFORE	42
VI.	TROP TARD! TROP TARD!	55
VII.	PRIVATE FAMILY AFFAIRS	65
VIII.	JACOB WRASCALL, GENT.	76
IX.	PÈRE LA CHAISE	81
X.	LE PROCÈS D'ACCUSATION	90
XI.	A FRIEND AT COURT	102
XII.	A PRISON IS A HOUSE OF CARE	111
XIII.	LE COUP D'ÉTAT	119
XIV.	AN EPISODE OF MODERN FRENCH HISTORY	129
XV.	MORE FAMILY MYSTERIES	136
XVI.	THE TOWER OF ST. JAQUES	146

CHAP.		PAGE
XVII.	RESTORATION	155
XVIII.	DOMESTIC TYRANNY	170
XIX.	WHEN THE WILD GOOSE HAS GONE SOUTHWARDS	182
XX.	A VERY QUESTIONABLE STORY	193
XXI.	ON, ON TO ROME!	209
XXII.	ECCLESIASTICAL INTELLIGENCE	217
XXIII.	THREE CAPITAL W's	226
XXIV.	STRANGE TO THE END	234
XXV.	AT HOME AND ABROAD	247
XXVI.	TRAVELLERS' TALES	259
XXVII.	THE "GULPER"	266
XXVIII.	ART IS LONG, AND TIME IS FLEETING	278
XXIX.	FROM GRAVE TO GAY	289
XXX.	A CRAFTY INQUIRY	293
XXXI.	GORLES *versus* LAMBARD	298
XXXII.	DE GUSTIBUS NON DISPUTANDUM	311

MELCHIOR GORLES.

CHAPTER I.

"Awake—awake ! arise ! or be for ever fallen."

MILTON.

I THINK that I must have fallen off asleep before *Taraxacum* had even left the room ; and soundly I must have slept for four or five hours ; but I am sure that it did not seem more than ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour at the outside, before my friend had come in again, standing over me with a flaring candle ; as he drew back the window-curtains—though there was as yet no daylight to let in—he begged me to look sharp, and tumble up as soon as possible. Whether he had been to bed at all himself I cannot say, but he looked just as fresh and full of spirits as ever.

He had already been downstairs, and kindly managed to procure for me a steaming cup of coffee, just to warm up "the cockles of my heart," as he expressed it, which, to tell the truth, in the state I was then, I not a little required.

As I sat up on the side of my bed I was seized with such a violent fit of shivering, and felt myself suddenly to be so completely unnerved and downhearted, that I positively declared that nothing should induce me to go to the place of meeting; and, in spite of all sense of shame or fear of disgrace, I really felt that I was morally and physically unable to face the danger, which now appeared before my dejected mind in all its most horrible reality.

You may imagine what a state I must have been in, when I did not feel even ashamed to confess as much to De Lyons. "You may go," I said, "if you please, but I have made up my mind that nothing shall induce me to do so; I have no excuse to offer, and don't care to make one, and I don't care a rap what either the French officers, or any one else may say, or think of me. But I am not going to be such a fool as to go out to be killed, as I am quite sure I should be, as long as I can possibly help it by keeping out of the way of danger." De Lyons stood staring at me with his eyes and mouth wide open as I thus shamelessly treated him to these ignoble sentiments. The words seemed to come out of my mouth in spite of myself, though they were precisely what I felt; and though I was not ashamed, I had a dim consciousness of being angry at thus exposing myself.

"This will never do," exclaimed De Lyons, still staring at me. "Pluck up, my dear fellow; just consider that the honour of your name, your family, even our country, as Englishmen, is at stake, that we should get through this affair creditably."

"Honour be rotted," I answered. "I tell you that I don't care a rap for the lot of it."

"Why, Frank Lambard, is this the way you are going to show the pluck, the bull-dog courage, for which, ever since you were a boy, you have always had the credit!"

"It is all very fine," I said, gloomily; "but, since that strange illness of mine, I have been a totally changed being. What pluck I may have had originally by nature has been crippled and tampered with by Gorles: not to speak of what was borrowed and never returned by your friend the Professor; and you yourself, Master De Lyons, managed to absorb a share of it at that same time, you know."

I thought I saw a smile play over his impudent face, but I should not have cared even if he had laughed right out, and mocked at me. But he was serious again in an instant.

"By Jove," he said, "I wonder if that is so!"

"Have you learnt to disbelieve your own theories, and the result of your own experiences?" I asked.

"No; though I have given up that sort of thing lately," he replied, thoughtfully. "Yet there may be really something in what you say: but, as far as I am concerned, you can have back my share returned to you in a brace of shakes; and, what is more, I will force Gorles to disgorge too. He would be the one to put you in the right state, if you would not mind allowing him to operate. I can do it, you know; but he has ten times the power that I have."

"Heaven forbid it!" I cried. "I would rather lie down and die like a dog in a hole, than consent to put myself more under the influence and power of that infernal little fiend, than I am already."

De Lyons stood for some minutes looking at me strangely, as if in deep consideration, and then muttered to himself, "Well, anything better than remain in the state of mind and feeling you seem to be at present; I must risk the consequences."

I knew what he was about, but did not attempt or even wish to resist him. I quietly placed my hands in his, without a word passing between us, felt my gaze fixing, was just conscious of his making the slow magnetic passes, as my eyelids dropped heavily, only to open again, as it seemed to me, immediately. Another shuddering fit passed all over me, but it was

not this time from any oppression of spirits, or other internal affection, but from the effect of a jug of cold water which De Lyons was pouring in a slow stream down the nape of my neck. The candle was gone; and through the window, which was quite open, I could perceive that the morning light had dawned. The first words which struck my ears, though I did not remember, or put any meaning to them until some time afterwards, were—"It will satisfy him, at any rate, and perhaps make a better man of him, and more like himself; but now cut it, before he sees you." And I turned round just in time to catch sight of some one slipping out of the door, whom I felt sure was Gorles.

De Lyons at first tried to shuffle out of the truth, but then confessed that he had called in Gorles's assistance, and that, having put him "*en rapport*" with myself, while he himself acted as the immediate medium, had insisted upon his restoring some portion at least, of that quality, of which he had become dishonestly possessed.

"In consequence of which," to use his own words, "so far from his acquiring a stronger influence, as you say you dread, there is now a much weaker community of feeling existing between you."

"How long have I been off?" I asked.

"A little more than half-an hour. But see, the day is breaking; we shall have no time to lose. Do not you feel yourself to be a different man already?"

It is a positive fact that I did. I rose up and stretched myself vigorously, feeling indeed a totally different and better man than I had been, I might say, for the last four or five months.

Cool and refreshed in spirit, with my nerves properly braced up, I now felt myself as firm and ready to hold my own in a good cause against any man in the world, as ever I was in my life.

When De Lyons, delighted at the success of his experiment, had left me alone to dress, I leant for some minutes out of the open window, inhaling the sharp and frosty morning air, with the keenest sense of exhilaration.

A regular course of good training could not have procured me the same consciousness of returning health and strength. I felt exactly as if I had received a new principle of life into my soul, and had just entered upon a new state of existence.

I was not long before I was ready; De Lyons coming in with the swords, and the corks still on them, as he said, just for five minutes more practice, to see that I had quite caught the dodge of the under-twist of the wrist, which he had tried to teach

me, and when I now took that well-balanced weapon in my hand, how different the grasp I had upon it felt from what it had been overnight!

As I parried *Taraxacum*'s assaults in tierce and quart, I felt sure that all my old skill and confidence of the fencing school was once more revived in me. And as to the cunning twist, indeed, it consisted more in sheer strength of wrist than anything else.

"That is about the dodge, I think," I said, as I whipped *Taraxacum's* sword out of his hand, so that its hilt came with a bang upon the floor almost hard enough to shiver the delicate blade into a dozen pieces.

"This wont do though, exactly," I exclaimed, when I had done laughing at *Taraxacum's* absurd face of astonishment at being thus shown the merit of his own lesson. "We must not kick up this infernal noise, or we shall have the whole house about our ears."

"All right," said De Lyons; "never mind the noise, the room under this is No. 56, where the venerable Viscomte is in bed, and it will do him good to have his rest disturbed again. By the way, I am afraid that my little scheme for sending Gorles in to rouse him up was a failure. I was in great hopes, for he was out of the room when I woke up about four o'clock, and I thought that he had gone off

to invade the old buffer's diggings, as I had directed him ; but if he did, he must have twigged the sell, and sneaked away quietly again without waking him. At any rate, there was no explosion, which I lay listening for, and Gorles came back presently looking even more sly than usual, and turned on to his bed again."

CHAPTER II.

SETTLED BY DEATH!

"Only one course remains, the world declares,
And death alone can settle such affairs."

"*Satisfaction,*" *Unpublished Poem by C. D. C.*

THERE were only one or two drowsy-looking waiters about the entrance of the hotel as we passed out into the yet perfectly quiet and empty street, each with our swords tucked up under our cloak, and our best chimney-pot hats upon our heads, which De Lyons had insisted upon our wearing, in preference to the more unpretending billy-cock of travelling order, as a mark of courtesy to our antagonists; though mine, kicked and flattened as it had been out of all recognised form, by Gorles having been rolling upon it through the whole of our night's journey, could, I fear, scarcely be considered to contribute much to the dignity of my personal appearance.

Though the sun was not yet risen, the morning air, clear and sharp with frost, was so invigorating to the spirits that, with the exception of a qualm, which for a moment or so came over me as I thought of my poor father, who would be now anxiously and vainly

expecting my arrival, I felt comfortable enough and quite ready for my work, or, as *Taraxacum* expressed himself, "fit all over, and right as a rivet."

On the very doorsteps we met an officer in a long military cloak and *kepi*, whom De Lyons immediately saluted and introduced to me as the Major. He was coming, as of course we guessed, to look after and conduct his principal, the Capitaine Tison, with proper ceremony to the place of meeting.

He had very thoughtfully brought a soldier-servant with him to show us the way, as it had occurred to him, he said, that it might perhaps be an embarrassment for us all to have had to go together under his own guidance to the place of meeting. So with another most courteous salute, and having mentioned that we should probably find the surgeon, and his friend, the accommodating *sous-lieutenant*, already arrived, the Major passed into the hotel.

Our guide without uttering a word, but having respectfully taken the swords to carry for us, led the way across a large square, or *place d'armes*, on to a very fine *quai*, which, with its immensely high and overtopping buildings, seemed to stretch away to an interminable length in both directions; over a handsome bridge, on which, besides only about half-a-dozen or so stray people, who seemed to be coming in from the

country, we met with a *sergent-de-ville* in undress uniform, who looked very hard at, and then stopped, our conductor. "Now we are in for it," we said; but no, our soldier seemed very easily to satisfy him, though by his looks and gestures, we could see that he was evidently explaining the connexion between ourselves and the swords, which he was carrying openly in his hand. And as we came up, instead of addressing, or, at any rate, scrutinizing us, as we fully expected the Gendarme to do, that discreet official was leaning over the parapet of the bridge, gazing very intently upon some object of much greater interest than ourselves, which seemed to have attracted his special notice in the rushing waters of the Rhone below.

"See, now, how much better they manage things here in France," remarked De Lyons. "Why in England, under less suspicious appearances, we should have had a dozen blunder-headed policemen at our heels by this time. And yet we are always crowing and cock-a-hooping about our boasted land of liberty!"

Having crossed the bridge, we shortly found ourselves in a suburb, and there our guide—thinking, I suppose, that as strangers we might find some interest in the fact—stopped to inform us that it was known as "*Le quartier de la Guillotière.*"

Having halted just long enough to convey this topographical announcement, he continued his course, skirting the high wall of what seemed like some ancient castle or fortification, at the back of which, having arrived at a low archway, which disclosed a passage under what seemed to be a deserted chapel, or perhaps convent, he drew himself up, and presenting us with our swords, made a sign for us to pass on; then, with a military salute, took a silent but respectful leave of us.

We heard the clocks and bells of the city chiming out half-past seven just as, emerging from the passage, we found ourselves in a small paddock or field, which, although there were no traces of gravestones or monuments in it, may probably have been the burial-ground attached to the sacred edifice under which we had entered.

Surrounded on all sides by a high wall, and not overlooked even by any window in the building I have mentioned, no place could have been imagined, or even made expressly, more exactly suited to the purpose for which we had been brought to it.

The ground was already occupied by two persons, the one very short and round, wearing a double eyeglass, which stuck by compression upon a most

comical red lump of a nose, just like a piece of beet-root.

"The jovial doctor, of course," whispered *Taraxacum*. "Don't he look a regular jolly fellow, now, all over?"

The other, a bright-eyed, active, well-made little man, who instantly suggested the idea of a fancy black-and-tan terrier. I caught the glance of my companion as he was not unnaturally taking a mental measure of his destined antagonist, and I rather inferred from his expression that he would not altogether mind making an exchange of him with me for the Captain. The two officers drew themselves up, and saluted us ceremoniously as we approached, to which we replied equally respectfully, by removing our chimney-pot hats and bowing to each separately.

"Ought we to introduce each other, or go up to speak to those swells?" I said, *sotto voce*, to De Lyons, on whom I entirely relied for guidance in all the proper forms and regulations of etiquette.

"I am not sure," replied he. "It might look like trying to make up to them: one never can be too particular in keeping to the strictest formalities."

They did not seem quite sure either, for they had advanced at first, and then stopped short and stood

staring at us: So we stood also and stared back at them; but, being in doubt, did not somehow like or care to be the first to attempt conversation. They also, I fancy, had come to precisely the same resolution.

"Your man must be here directly," said *Taraxacum*, "that will settle the difficulty; but I wish he would come; it's plaguey cold here on this frosty grass."

Still we waited.

"Have you got a bit of smoke about you?" presently inquired *Taraxacum*.

"No; I have come out without my case—besides it wouldn't do, I think. Those swells threw away their cigars when we came on to the ground."

"Ah! strict etiquette, I daresay. It wont do to show ourselves ignorant in such matters; it is always the best to keep on the strict side—but bother it! how cold my poor toes are getting."

So were mine, and my fingers too, so that I could scarcely hold my sword-hilt. "How would it do," I suggested, "to have a practice?"

"Not at all. We have got no corks; besides, it would look so funny, not to speak of letting that sharp-looking subaltern, who I am sure knows quite enough already, twig the trick of my pet undertwist."

We heard the clocks striking another quarter.

"Confound them! this is too bad of your man," said De Lyons, quite indignantly, as if it was my fault. "What do you mean by engaging with such a lazy beggar?—you, or at least he, ought really to be ashamed of himself: my feet are frozen, I tell you. I must jump, or run, or dance, or do something."

De Lyons' patience was fast evaporating, and so was his strict attention to etiquette; for giving me his sword to hold for him, he first began to throw up his best hat, and try to catch it on his head, and then to the violent performance of a double shuffle, or nigger-dance, accompanying himself by slapping his hands together, and singing—

"Oh, Susannah!
Don't you cry for me,
I am going to Alabama
On the borders of the sea."

"Don't," I said: "remember where you are, my dear fellow. Do have some regard to decency and etiquette."

"Oh, bother!" he replied. "Those Frenchy's didn't see me—they had their backs to us."

That was luckily the fact at the moment, for they were turned away, talking together earnestly, and looking towards the place by which we had entered. Still there we were waiting. In about two minutes, *Taraxacum* began again, at first only with a subdued

stamp, gradually, however, increasing into the recognised heel-and-toe performance, with "Oh, Susannah," louder than before.

"Don't," I said, "make such a fool of yourself. The Frenchmen are looking; they are laughing at you!"

"The deuce they are!" said *Taraxacum*. "Chuck me my sword—I'll give the gentlemen something to laugh at!"

As he turned, the Major appeared at the entrance, alone, just as all the clocks in the city were booming out "eight." But, the Major only. He appeared to have been running,—that is, as fast as any Frenchman, with his tittuppy little steps, can be said to run. We could see in his face, even before he had recovered breath enough to speak, that something strange had occurred.

"Messieurs," he panted, "my friend Captain Tison would not thus have kept you waiting, but a terrible event has overtaken him. On entering his uncle's room to receive his last instructions before attending upon you, gentlemen, at this rendezvous, figure to yourselves his emotions of horror at finding that venerable relative fallen in a fit—if not even already dead—rigid and unconscious. Doctor, there is no time to lose; but, gentlemen, under circumstances so

astounding, you can hardly have expected the Captain to have quitted the bedside of the nearest relation he has in the world, while there is a shade of hope left to him. He has commissioned me to tender any apology which may be required, for thus having needlessly troubled you, besides a complete retraction of his words of last night; leaving it to yourselves, gentlemen, whether you shall in return think fit to offer any expressions of regret for any measures which you may have, at the time, thought necessary to put in force."

Of course I immediately made the requisite pretty speech, at the same time returning our weapons, with thanks, to their courteous owner. We hastened back with all speed to the hotel, utterly forgetting even to look for the slashing young hero by the way, until pushing our way, with the rest of the world, into No. 56, we found that the sharp-eyed terrier was the doctor, who was in the act of trying the poor Vicomte's arm with his lancet; my attention was specially called to that fact by De Lyons' sudden exclamation of—

"By jingo! the jolly-nosed chap in spectacles was my man then. I think I could have spitted his *fois gras* for him without much trouble."

I could not help giving *Taraxacum* a rattling side-

kick for this brutal insensibility in the very presence of the poor dead old man. It gave me a turn as I looked upon his straggling white locks, and the ghastly paleness of those features which last night had been so hot and fiery with rage. His eyes were still wide open, and there was an expression about them, and in the deep lines of the fallen jaw, indicative of the most intense horror and fear, as if some dreadful person or object had been present to his last fixed gaze. The little doctor was wiping the blade of his lancet, and shook his head slowly to the Captain, who was still supporting his uncle's body on the opposite side of the bed. Suddenly a thought seemed to strike De Lyons, who, since my very pointed rebuke, had been standing as quietly and reverently as anybody.

"Where is Gorles?" he suddenly exclaimed. "*Où est le petit Monsieur Anglais?*" turning to inquire of some of the *garçons*. Then he went up to the side of the bed—no one interfered with him—and gently lifting the eyelid of the already open eye, peered closely and curiously into the unnaturally dilated pupil.

"That is it sure enough," he muttered, as if having gathered some assurance from his scrutiny; "I believe he might be revived yet. Is Monsieur Gorles

still in the house—*le petit Monsieur Anglais*?" he again inquired.

"Was he then a doctor?" asked many voices—"*ce petit nain original?*"

He had paid his bill and left for Chalons by the second boat, which departed at half-past seven precisely.

"This is Gorles's work, as sure as I am alive;" whispered De Lyons, very quietly to me as he withdrew from the bedside. "He might perhaps have been able to have undone what I have no doubt is his doing!"

What would I have given never to have heard those dreadful words!

If he had not suggested the terrible idea, I am certain that it would never have even occurred to me. But now I was indeed struck down and almost stunned with the tremendous heinousness of so atrocious a deed, in which I could not but feel that I was myself not slightly implicated as an accessory.

With just presence of mind remaining to prevent betraying myself upon the spot by some rash word or expression of self-inculpation, I rushed off to my own room, in a perfect agony of grief and horror; and from the actual scene which I had just witnessed, my mind naturally turned from the picture of that poor

old man, whom I had just seen lying there fixed in death before my eyes, to that of my own dear Father, who might perhaps at that very moment be like him stretched lifeless on a bed, surrounded by a similar group of strangers, gazing and wondering at him.

That fearful idea once conceived, became more and more distinct before me, haunting me to that degree that, as I rolled upon my bed, I almost cried aloud in the agony of my spirit.

De Lyons came after a time to my door; he entered very gently, and seemed amazed at the extent to which he found me affected. He seemed to be himself vexed and rather flustered, and he no longer kept up that cold-blooded irreverence of manner which had so much disgusted me.

But he told me, that finding Gorles was really gone—who he really thought might have been able to restore the old man to animation—that he himself had boldly announced his own experience in similar cases, and had offered, if the room was cleared, to try his skill; but that neither the nephew or the doctors—for a second had been called in—would listen to him, or even appear to understand what he was talking about.

Both the medical men concurred, and stuck to the opinion that the immediate cause of death was in the heart; and of course it would never have done to have let out that he had any reason to suppose Gorles could have been exercising his magnetic influence upon the old man, or had ever been near his room; the only effect of which would have been, as De Lyons very truly remarked, that we should have been pretty sure of being hauled up for accomplices.

He had, he told me, even slipped back into the room afterwards, when all had left it, and having put a jug of cold water ready, was actually beginning with some upward passes to disperse the magnetic forces, but the police authorities had come in to take official possession of the body, and turned him out again.

"Well, it cannot be helped," he went on to philosophize; "he couldn't have lasted long anyhow in the course of nature—past seventy-four, as they tell me, is above any Frenchman's average; and he was even now on his way to Paris for medical advice. So all we have to do is to hold our tongues, and keep our own counsel, and get on our own way as fast as possible. I have taken care to make a great point to my

friend the Major and the rest of them of your natural anxiety to get on to your poor father without a moment's delay, and as they tell me the *malle-poste* starts at noon for Chalons, I sent to secure the two places at once. In the meantime the Major has asked us to come and breakfast with him at the *restaurant*, where we are to meet that varmint-looking little surgeon, and the ruby-nosed subaltern, and a lot of them. I can't at all get over his not being the jovial doctor: he looked the part so thoroughly,—didn't he, now?"

I utterly declined the invitation. I had not heart for it; and so I begged him to make any excuses on my part he liked.

"Ah well," said De Lyons, trying his best to look sympathizing, "I agree with you, and quite understand your feelings, my dear fellow; but though, like you, I should have preferred to have declined, it struck me, you see, that it might disarm suspicion and throw them off the scent, if there should arise any idea of—well—not foul play exactly, but science carried accidentally just a little too far; so I made up my mind to hide my shocked feelings beneath a mask of hollow gaiety, and accepted the invitation. They seem right good-hearted fellows: and be-

sides, what on earth is one to do with oneself in this strange place till twelve o'clock? Now you wont change your mind, and come?——*Au revoir* then—at twelve."

CHAPTER III.

"Conscius audacis facti, caudamque reflectens."—Virg. *Æn.*, xi.

"Conscious of an audacious fact, which sets him reflecting on a cord."
Printer's Devil.

When *Taraxacum* returned from his entertainment, only just time enough to get our things together for a start, he seemed so entirely to have succeeded in assuming the mask of gaiety, that I verily believe, until he saw me again, he had clean forgotten the whole of the morning's dreadful business; he was in the most uproarious spirits at having chaffed them all —meaning the whole mess of his new friends the dragoons—as he declared, clean off their legs.

After a tremendous feed at the *restaurant* they had all adjourned to the friendly Major's own quarters, where the varmint doctor had sung his best songs, which De Lyons had responded to by some of his most rattling German drinking-choruses, in which he had made them all join.

Then they had had a turn-up with the foils, with which he had made such good use of his pet under-

twist that he had gained a signal victory, not only over the slashing subaltern—who knew well what he was about too, though he was so round, and had pinched his waist all up into the tip of his nose—but had even puzzled the regimental *Maître d'armes* himself, into the bargain.

And he now seemed to have brought the whole regiment, all the officers at least, at his heels, who attended us in a body to the *bureau des postes*, to see us off, and to drink *bon voyage* to us both—for I was included in the compliment—in bottles of champagne, which they had brought with them for the purpose.

"I really wonder that you have not more good feeling, my dear fellow," I said, remonstrating, as soon as we were clear off the rattling stones, and could hear one another speak.

"Oh, what's the odds! There can be no use in making ourselves miserable about what cannot be helped; it wont stick the poor old gentleman up again you know; and for that matter they wouldn't let me try when I wanted to do so. Besides, he was no friend of ours—quite the reverse, in fact; and it was by no fault of his that we are not both of us at this moment lying stiff, and stuck through the gizzard, in the nasty cold damp grass behind that chapel-place, or in the public *morgue*—if there is such an insti-

tution at Lyons—with our clothes hanging upon a peg above us, and a stream of cold water dripping on to our noses, which actually gives me the creeping shivers even to think of, in this beastly cold weather. Considering the circumstances, I really think that so far from making ourselves miserable, we ought to feel particularly jolly—as I must confess I do—at getting uncommonly well out of what might have turned out an ugly scrape enough for one or other of us, or perhaps both, take it which way you will."

We were rattling over the ground at a tremendous pace, and though I could not help feeling so far invigorated, and the better for the motion, I again and again found myself brooding and, as it were, almost fretting over my own thoughts in the corner.

"That wretched Gorles," I said, at last, breaking a long silence, "has already, either directly or indirectly, been the cause of every misfortune I have met with in my life; but——"

"Well, at any rate," cut in De Lyons, "if he did indirectly let you and me into this scrape this time, you cannot deny that he has managed to get us out of it again, in about the only way that could have happened, without causing the delay and detention which would have been so important to you; and your poor father's accident is a misfortune with which you can-

not certainly in any way connect any agency of his directly or indirectly."

"Perhaps not," I replied; "though even in that, I should not be surprised to find that he was somehow at the bottom of it." I can hardly tell now under what convictions I spoke, as you shall hear presently, thus prophetically; "but if it had not been for Gorles, the letters would not have been delayed, and I might have been with my poor father by this time. As to his having brought us out of this last scrape, has it not been by a mean and cowardly use of his strange and unhallowed powers for evil?—and have we not too much reason to feel disgraced in having forfeited our characters as gentlemen and men of honour, in having by such means escaped from the consequences of our own challenges. I, for my part, feel that in my own conscience I can never hold up my head fairly again."

"Oh, bother what one's own private conscience may think about the matter! as long as we came off with flying colours in the eyes of the other party. And it strikes me (if you will only excuse my plain speaking) that you had not so much to say about disgrace, or were quite so punctilious about your honour, this morning when I first woke you up. In the strange state of spirits in which I then

found you, there was nothing small you would not have said or submitted to, to have got off, no matter how, from facing your man: and I could not have strung your nerves up into the order I did, without Gorles' assistance. I think you owe him a good turn for that anyhow; for the restitution was, after all, entirely his doing, though I persuaded and forced him into it, and I think you ought to feel obliged to him. For my part, I really believe in his professions of good-will and attachment to yourself notwithstanding your suspicions and accusations against him. He certainly meant what he was saying, when he expressed such regret and anxiety on your behalf, and declared that he would gladly do anything in his power to help you through that trouble, and prevent your risking your life for what was his own fault. And for that matter, he has been as good as his word, with a vengeance—having gone, I guess, a trifle further than he himself intended or reckoned on; but still you know he did intend it all for the best all the time."

"And do you really mean to argue," I asked, angrily, "that I ought to feel grateful and indebted to a little monster who has thus degraded me in my own estimation, by implicating me in a crime for which every one, even suspecting the fact, would look

upon me with shame and horror? I certainly never thought that even his influence over me, powerful and evil as it was, could ever have caused me to become an accomplice, as I now feel myself to be, in a cowardly and cold-blooded murder."

"Hush! for goodness' sake don't talk so loud!—the guard-fellow in front there may overhear us. Half those fellows understand more English than you give them credit for, particularly such startling nouns and adjectives as you are now using:" and he drew up the window between our compartment and that of the courier in front.

A needless precaution, however, for I relapsed into moody silence, and I do not think that we exchanged another dozen words during the remainder of our six hours' journey.

We arrived at Chalons in good time, and took our places in the railroad at once for Paris.

CHAPTER IV.

ECCE ITERUM!

"LOOK alive! this way!" cried De Lyons, "there's a *coupé* on the train. Let us bag it by all means. There is something extra to pay, but as we shall secure the two corners we are pretty sure to keep it alone to ourselves, and shall sleep all night as soundly as if we were in our own beds."

"And what a blessing to think," I added, "that we have got free of that horrible little brute Gorles: at any rate we shall not have a row to go through at every station. I suppose that he is by this time pretty well arrived at his journey's end?"

"Not till three A.M. to-morrow morning," replied *Taraxacum*, who was studying the *Indicateur*: "and we get in soon after four, as this train is an express, you see."

So we made ourselves as comfortable as we could for the night; my companion ingeniously building up a pile of bags and cloaks in the vacant seat, with a

billy cock hat stuck on the top, so as to deceive any designing intruder. We were not long before we were both fast asleep, and I had just a dim consciousness of stopping at one or two stations, and then whirling along again at express speed; sometimes screaming through tunnels, sometimes rushing over bridges, which seemed to shake and tremble under us; until the pace sensibly slackening, with more wild screaming of the steam-whistle, then the shrill groaning of the breaks, and the tooting of the *conducteur's* horn, we rumbled into a huge building, jolting over the points, and bang, bang, bang over the turning-tables; while the flashing of lights, and voices of guards bellowing out the name of "Dinon! Dinon!" woke us up sufficiently to become aware that we had arrived as far as that provincial city, upon our journey.

That is an abominable trick they have on the French and other continental lines, of suddenly throwing open all the carriage-doors as they come past into the station, disturbing one, if asleep, and anyhow letting in a gust of cold wind sharp enough to cut one's legs off.

"Confound their officiousness!" growled De Lyons. "What do they want to do that for? I almost wish little Gorles was here for the moment—wouldn't he just have flown at them for their stupidity!"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when, as he leant forward to get hold of the swinging-door, a small figure skipped nimbly in, passed him, and in less than a twinkling, was squatting upon the top of the pile of bags and cloaks, grinning down upon us from that eminence.

Surprise, mingled with horror, positively took my breath away. I rubbed my eyes, and sat bolt-upright, staring at this apparition without uttering even a sound.

Taraxacum, for the space of some seconds, seemed as much aghast and taken back as I was, till at last he found words enough to ask in a sort of hollow whisper—

"Why, Gorles, where in the name of the devil himself do you come from?"

Before he had time to answer this solemn adjuration, a porter came to the carriage-door with a parcel in his hand.

"*Ah! say sar maircy bieng, sait ar-moi too-drau-er*," he said, in his peculiar French, as reaching across De Lyons, he took possession of the original sweet-meat barrel.

"The fact is," he explained, "I had come quite to the end of those excellent *bong-bongs*, and on arriving here by the last train, had run in to the

buffey to have it replenished. There were positively so many good things to choose from, I found it quite difficult to make up my mind : and so, though I sung out to them to wait only a moment, and that I should be ready in another minute, the train went on without me—and all my luggage, and the rest of my things with it. I will complain to the Directors, and have that rascally *conducteur* dismissed, as soon as I arrive in Paris, as sure as I am alive ; or I will bring an action against them, if it costs me a hundred pounds ! I pitched into the station-master here, I can tell you, pretty freely, but the impudent rascal only shrugged his shoulders, and slammed his door in my face ; I will have him dismissed, too, or I will know the reason why. However, I guessed you fellows might be in time for this next train, so I kept a look-out for you : and now here we are again together, you see, all right," and he grinned down upon us benignly, right and left, from his seat aloft, on which he was still perched.

Not one single word did I vouchsafe to answer him. I had turned round into my own corner with a shudder of horror and disgust, and pretended to be asleep, but I could not help hearing all he had to say for himself, as he and De Lyons kept up a continual chatter.

"Well," I heard him say as soon as we were again started; "so you must have got through that little affair in good time, and without any real fighting after all; the gallant captain not come to the scratch, and rather drowsy and hard to wake up, ay? If they got him down to the ground at all, I will be bound to say he was not good for much; I flatter myself I had effectually bound him over to keep the peace, for the next twelve hours at least, and I suppose he may be just about this time waking up comfortably. Of course it all went off as I expected—it takes two to carry out a duel satisfactorily; and so I suppose you waited at the place of assignation for a certain time, and finding that the other side didn't show, naturally came on your way rejoicing."

He paused, and I suppose looked carefully round to assure himself that I was fast asleep, for he then went on in a much lower voice, but I heard him.

"Our friend here didn't spring another leak in his courage pumps, did he? What a queer turn that was for him to take this morning; such a fine plucky fellow as he has always seemed naturally to be. But I suppose you brought him round all right, and up to the mark, by giving into that strange fancy of his, as to how much my help could do for him. I do wonder

why he so persists in cherishing that intense feeling against me always."

"There never was any love lost between you as boys," answered *Taraxacum*. "And then the way you carried on with that pretty cousin of his at Dresden."

"Well, I didn't know that he had ever seen her; besides, I had as much right to admire and try to win her affections as he had, if you come to that; and all is fair in love."

"Not to the extreme lengths you tried on, and in which I am always so glad to think I effectually sold you. But he knows more of that matter than you think—but never mind all that now."

I fancy that De Lyons noticed a movement of struggling wrath and fury as I lay trying, and pretending to be asleep; and he thought it might be as well to change the conversation.

"Never mind that," he said; "but just tell me shortly what you did, or rather fancy you did, with the captain this morning. What room had you gone creeping into, when I woke and missed you?"

"Why, the Captain's—as you yourself told me, *numero sankaunt siz*."

De Lyons immediately went off into a roar of laughter, as if it was really the very best joke in the world, and then exclaimed—

"The Captain's indeed! ha, ha, ha! not a bit of it: *numero sankaunt siz,* as you call it, was where the old fellow slept, the peppery old Vicomte, and when they went into his room in the morning, there he lay as dead as a door-nail. You have put your foot into it this time, my interesting young friend, and no mistake." And then he went on with a full and particular account, embellished with his usual style of slang and irreverent illustrations, of the whole morning's scene and incident of horror.

I must so far give Gorles the credit to say that by the tone of his voice he did seem for the moment rather staggered at the news. "Dead!" he said with a long whistle; "you are joking, surely; trying to cram me, ain't you, now?"

"Not a bit of it: we left the poor old codger there in his bed, as dead as Nebuchadnezzar; and so under the circumstances, as I tell you, the captain sent to cry off, and thus the matter was settled without any fight. It was stopped, you see, but not as you intended to manage it, 'cute as you are. But now make a clean breast of it, and tell me exactly, without any of your lies or prevarications, what was your real share in this unlucky business."

"Oh," replied Gorles, after a pause, "all I know

about it, is, that I went very softly into the room, which you told me was the captain's, meaning, as I now imagine, just to sell me. There was a night-lamp burning, but so dimly that I could only just make out a figure, almost sitting up, he was so propped up by pillows in bed. I had him fast by the thumbs before he was well awake, and in my hurry I passed such a strong shock on to him, that I sensibly felt the difference in my own system. I calculated that upon a man in his full prime and vigour, which was what I supposed my patient to be, the effect would last for about ten or twelve hours—that is, that he would have been up waking just about now, at this hour of the evening, and have been by this time none the worse for his long sleep."

"But the old fellow must have seen you pretty plainly, too," answered De Lyons, in the most practical tone; "for there was your image fixed in the pupils of his filmy old eyes as distinctly as in any photograph, for any one to see and recognise, if they had only thought of looking, as I did."

"Yes, that may be true, for just before he fell back, and as I was making the last settling passes over him, a sudden light flashed out of his eyes, as bright as any lightning."

"That must have been the vital spark leaving him, under your very hands, depend upon it. Your extra strong shock must have produced a sudden seizure of the heart, for which very complaint they told us that he was on his way to Paris for medical advice."

"Ah, well then," said Gorles, quite coolly, "it was his own fault; he ought to have said so. How was I to know that? And after all, he may have been just going to die of heart complaint, anyhow, even if I had not interfered with him. But I hope nobody else seemed to suspect, did they? Our friend here, for instance (meaning myself)—what did he seem to think about it?"

"Cut up dreadful rough, I can tell you. It is just the sort of thing that he would be apt to take strong views about; he is so fearfully sensitive. I was really almost afraid that he would have let the cat out of the bag; I mean, by letting them see that we knew more than we ought about the business. I was only too glad to see him clear off to his own room without compromising us. I fancy that you will find his tick against yourself stronger than ever, in consequence of this little misadventure—if that is possible."

And thus the two went on, calmly discussing that old man's awfully sudden death, which one of them

had, whether intentionally or not, most undoubtedly caused, with no more sense of guilt or remorse about them, than if it had been a dog. And there was I, shut up in the same carriage with two cold-blooded assassins, being myself almost an accessory, not to say actual accomplice, in the dreadful crime.

The very thought was becoming too horrible; it occurred to me, that if I really fell off to sleep, as I had been all the while feigning to be, it mghit suit their views to treat me in the same way, and I began to fall under the influence of a sort of waking nightmare, and to fancy that they had already done for me, and that I could even hear them discussing and joking over the fact, as they had just before been doing with their previous victim.

I could hardly refrain from actually screaming out for help, but I roused myself, and sat upright watching them.

They both of them addressed me, but I would not, could not, answer. I began to feel almost the same horror and loathing for De Lyons as for the other, though I soon had reason again to acknowledge his personal kindness and friendship for me, where such sentiments were of real value.

When they saw that I was awake, by way of changing their topic, they fell to discussing, and soon

squabbling over that odious sweet-meat barrel again; but it was now full of cold cutlets, meat pies, and such-like comestibles, which De Lyons fell upon with such remarkable avidity, that Gorles had to remonstrate, and shut up his store and put it underneath him.

Then having sufficiently gorged themselves, they became silent, and seemed to have dropped off to sleep, but for some time I solemnly believe that Gorles slept with only one eye at a time. Twice, if not three times, I sat up and stretched forward to look at him, and though he was snoring loudly, one of his eyes was wide open, and fixed upon myself with a stony glare.

I became so nervous, and, as it were, terror-stricken, that I could bear it no longer; but at the next station at which we stopped, I jumped out, and ran along the train in hopes of finding room in some other carriage to which I might change. There was not a single vacant place, so I was forced to return to the purgatory, or even worse, from which I had sought to escape. Then I must have fallen asleep again for some time, though I dreaded the very thought of doing so; but I was awoke by a strong smell of fire—burnt cork, as it afterwards proved to be. De Lyons was smoking at the time, and I sup-

posed that a spark from his pipe must have fallen upon the lining or mat of the carriage. By-and-by he was cautiously attempting another attack upon the provision barrel, but Gorles, though up to that very moment soundly snoring, was awake, and down upon him like a shot.

CHAPTER V.

"Coming events cast their shadows before."—CAMPBELL.

THUS another night's journey wearily wore on. At Tonnerre we stopped, and all turned out for supper—or early breakfast I suppose it might rather be considered. The platform was on my side as I got out, and De Lyons followed me. Though much disgusted with him, I did not mind speaking to him when alone; but when that fellow Gorles was there, I was determined that nothing should induce me thus to compromise myself.

Taraxacum was looking as full of mischief as any ape. He told me that Gorles was now really left sound asleep in the *coupé*, and that he had slipped past without waking him. I saw that he was quite bursting to tell me something more, but I would not condescend to ask what it might be.

Just as everyone had finished, and the bell was ringing to warn us all back to our carriages, in rushed Gorles, looking more like his real character of a fiend

incarnate than ever. His nose was jet black, he had a deep ring of black round each eye, and his apology for a moustache and his eyebrows were also embellished with the same coal-black dye. De Lyons had been amusing himself at his chosen friend and accomplice's expense with a burnt cork.

Could anyone for a moment have imagined that either one of that couple had the crime of murder, and that of not twenty hours' standing, on their conscience! There was a pause of blank astonishment, and then a roar of laughter rang through the whole refreshment-hall, in which even all the *garçons* of the buffet and officials of the train joined.

Gorles himself, not the least aware of the real cause, but imputing it only to the fact of his having overslept himself, and arrived just in time to meet everybody scrambling back to their places, waxed furious. He caught up a huge roll of bread, which he shied at the nearest grinning *garçon's* head, with an imprecation at his impudence, and throwing down the money for a bottle of cognac, took it off with him back to his place in the train without having the least discovered the real cause of the general merriment.

All the rest of our way up, at every station at which we stopped, the *conducteurs*, the porters, the very

engineers and travellers, hopping out expressly from their own places, came crowding round our carriage to gaze in at Gorles, and then go off into shouts of laughter. He grew perfectly wild with rage; he rushed at the window, cursing, swearing, threatening, and even bringing into use his old trick of spitting out at them, until I could bear it in silence no longer. I was in no humour to find myself again embroiled in another serious quarrel, so, in spite of my resolution against speaking, I desired De Lyons rather sharply to drop that game, and explain to his friend the real cause of the public wonder and merriment.

Thus enlightened, Gorles proceeded to wash or rather smear his face all round and round with his handkerchief, which he dipped into his brandy-bottle, the effect of which was, that having spread the dingy smudge pretty equally over all, he looked for all the world like one of those singing niggers who go about the streets and race-courses; and having thus completed his toilet to his own satisfaction, the little beast presently fell asleep again, and rolled down on to the mat, and under the seat, where he lay snuffling and snorting for the rest of the journey.

I had almost made up my mind to have dropped Master De Lyons' company, for, as I have said, I felt disgusted and horrified towards him as being no

better than a cold-blooded brute and murderer, but I saw that he was deep in the *Indicateur* again, and as I wanted information, I asked him to see by what train I could get on to Abbeville with as little delay as possible, and how long I should have to stop in Paris?

"Not till the eight o'clock morning train," he replied; and then went on to study the time-table. "If we had gone on to Paris by the mid-day train, which we should of course have done had we not been delayed as we were at Lyons, you could have got on by the Nord Railway by the last train, and you ought to have been at Abbeville—let me see—one—two — two forty-seven, you would have been with your father almost exactly by this time—that is, allowing a full half-hour or three-quarters to have cleared your luggage, and found out wherever he may have been taken, and so on. Yes, if we had not unluckily lost that time, I calculate that you ought to have arrived just about as near this exact present moment as possible."

"Ha! ha! ha!" shrieked Gorles from beneath the seat, "actually dead. Well, no one can say that it was my doing!"

"He is talking in his sleep," said De Lyons, administering a kick with his heel below; "and

laughing, too, the awful little sinner. Only hark to him!"

I pulled my cap tightly down over my face, and shrunk into the corner of my seat terror-stricken; a shock almost as though of paralysis seemed to shrivel up every nerve in my body; for even while that sudden and revolting peel of demoniacal laughter was still ringing in my ears, I distinctly saw present before me a vision of my poor Father, just as if in a flash of lightning, for a single instant.

My eyes were covered and closed, but yet, as I say, I distinctly saw my poor father propped up on many pillows in a bed, exactly as I had seen the old Vicomte that morning.

There was a large clock in the room whose hands pointed exactly at twenty-three minutes to four. There seemed also to be two or three figures round the bedside whom I could not, or at least did not, distinguish. One of them had my father by the hand, or might have been holding his pulse; another person seemed at that very moment to enter hastily, and all turned anxiously towards him.

Then I heard my poor father, in his own natural voice, but speaking very, very weakly, ask, "Has anyone arrived?"

The person who had entered shook his head and answered, but I could distinguish no sound.

Then again my Father spoke distinctly in his own usual cheery voice, "Ah! my boy, here you are at last; but too late—too late! Why couldn't your mother come to me? God bless and keep you both. Good-by." And I saw him just as clearly as I see you now before me, fall back upon his pillow—dead!

Except as to the form and position on the mantelpiece of the clock which I have mentioned, I retained scarcely more than the vaguest idea, either as to the arrangement or the general appearance of the chamber itself in which that fatal scene took place; but I had not from the very first the slightest doubt of its actual reality, and there were only two points which at all puzzled me, or the least inclined me to explain what I had seen, by attributing it to the mere illusion of an ordinary dream.

I thought that it was strange and improbable that my poor father, being surrounded as I supposed him to be entirely by French people, should address them in such plain English as had distinctly sounded in my ears; and, in the next place, I did not understand how he should be aware, as by his last words he certainly seemed to be, that I only, was coming to him, alone,

without my Mother, whom he would naturally be expecting.

I suppose I must have given vent to my feelings by a deep groan or some other outward indication of my misery, for I found that De Lyons had shifted his seat to come close to my side, and guessing, I suppose, the train of my thoughts, was doing his best to cheer me, and keep up hope within me.

He volunteered to come on with me to Abbeville, if I would allow him, and, as we should have some three or four hours to spend in Paris, said he should insist upon my turning regularly into bed, at a very quiet and comparatively unknown hotel which he could highly recommend, and where, if I would come with him he could guarantee that I should be comfortable, and he would himself see to my being up, and ready to go on again by the early train.

"Anywhere you like," I said, "if only we can escape from and get rid of the company of that dreadful little wretch."

"All right! It is a house of which he is not likely to think, and probably never even heard," was De Lyons' answer, as with a significant gesture he designated Gorles, who was still loudly snoring beneath the seat; but he did not even mention the name or situation of the hotel.

At last we were at Paris. How thankful I felt; but as we turned out into the cold raw drizzle of that dark morning, I caught myself quite staggering, thoroughly done up, and most thankful was I for the assistance of friendly De Lyons, who insisted upon my at once stowing myself into a *fiacre*, where I remained quietly, and partially recovered myself, while he, like a good fellow, bustled about after my luggage and things, as well as his own.

"What hotel are you fellows going to?" I heard Gorles ask him.

"Oh, don't know!—haven't made up our minds," was the evasive reply, and De Lyons took the further precaution of not even telling the driver until we were clear of the station gates. "We are not going anywhere that you are likely to think of, and come to set the whole place by the ears, my amiable young friend; and it will take you some time, I guess, to recover your lost luggage at this time of the morning, so we shall get a fair start of you that way, anyhow," was De Lyons' remark, just as, moving off, we saw Gorles flying venomously, first at a *facteur* on one side, and then on the other almost simultaneously abusing an official of the *octroi*, who had smelt out, and was demanding his dues upon, the contents of the still partially filled provision barrel.

L'Hôtel Rochfort was our destination; and it certainly seemed as if it were, indeed, not much known, insomuch that *Taraxacum* had some little difficulty in explaining its whereabouts to the *cocher*.

"Where the deuce is the fellow taking us to now?" he said, presently, as, turning out of a main thoroughfare, we plunged into a labyrinth of narrow little streets in the Faubourg St. Antoine. "These fellows are as fond of trying favourite short cuts as our own London cabbies. I hope he is not going to take us down any of these filthy places to cut our unfortunate wizens for us."

We went rumbling on, till all at once we were brought up short by a great chasm in the road, and the paving-stones all up in heaps across the way.

"Holloa! here's a barricade," exclaimed De Lyons. "Shouldn't much wonder if there were a lot of pleasant ruffians behind it, with red caps of liberty on their heads, and fire-arms loaded to the muzzle in their hands. I was told that that sort of amusement was again in the wind, and might be expected daily."

For that time, however, it proved to be no worse than laying down the peaceful gas-pipe, or some such municipal undertaking, such as we are too well accusto in our own metropolis; but we had a great job to

get the horse and vehicle turned round in that narrow street, and at least half an hour was lost—by no means an uncommon result of short cuts, especially, by the great "rule of Contraries," when one happens to be in a very great hurry.

"All right; here we are at last. Why don't the *cocher* take us up to the door, I wonder?" said De Lyons, as he poked his head impatiently out of the window.

He quickly drew it in again—with a queer expression on his face, of dismay and half ludicrous incredulity.

"Well, if this don't beat Bannagher!" he exclaimed, as, letting himself out of the vehicle, he ran forward to inspect more closely a rather remarkable-looking valise, on the top of a *fiacre*, which must have arrived only the very instant before ourselves, and now stopped the way in front of the *porte cochère*. The small, low wicket in the great gates was open. We passed in, and found ourselves immediately in the midst of turmoil.

Gorles himself, from whom we had flattered ourselves on so successfully escaping, was raging furiously in the midst of the court of that retired little Hôtel Rochfort, being already engaged in war to the knife, not only with the driver of the *fiacre* which had brought him, but in the brief space of less than five

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLIN

minutes that he had been there, he had contrived to insult and bring down upon himself the whole conclave of the establishment. Like a swarm of angry wasps, there surged around him a small crowd, who by their dishevelled and, more or less, deshabille appearance, evidently betokened that they had only just rolled out of their several beds. The *maître d'hôtel,* the landlady, the *garçon,* the cook, the scullion, the boots, all chattering, scolding, screaming at once, with every sort of shrugging, gesticulation, and grimace, such as can only be seen to perfection in a regular shindy among genuine Frenchmen in a rage; unless, perhaps, in the cage full of monkeys in the Zoological Gardens. How exactly he could have contrived in those few minutes thus to have set them all by the ears, I cannot imagine, and we did not stay to inquire; but making our way as quickly as we could through the scene of conflict, we fortunately met an individual upon the staircase, who, as he descended, was girding up his loins to rush into the battle-field below, but on seeing us he stopped, and conducted us civilly into two spare rooms.

We had hardly laid down our things, and were ordering some coffee, or something, when we heard Gorles come bounding up the stairs and along the passage, shouting De Lyons' name at the top of his

voice, followed by the whole pack of these freshly-roused enemies at his heels. De Lyons was only just in time to slam the door right in his face, and turn the key; then he heard a violent scuffle in the passage, and running to the window, which gave into the *rue* in which the Hôtel Rochfort is situated, were just in time to enjoy the intense satisfaction of seeing the little beast ignominiously thrust out of the small door by which he had come in.

Nor were we less gratified at witnessing the *cocher*, as if inspired by a sudden thought, spring upon the box of his *fiacre*, on which Gorles's valise was still remaining, and drive off at full speed, entirely deaf to the cries of the frantic owner, who ran down the middle of the street shouting and yelling after him in vain.

The rest which we attempted to snatch was hardly worth having after all; but somewhat refreshed with a strong basin of *consommé aux œufs*, which was expressly recommended and provided for us by the civillest of landladies, and a good cold bath, we were ready to start again by eight o'clock.

De Lyons had quite made up his mind, and insisted upon coming on with me, in spite of my remonstrances, or anything I could say. He assured me that in his new vocation as *commis voyageur*, he was left by his respectable employers very much to

his own discretion and judgment to decide as to what places he might visit or stay at, in trying to extend the commercial connexions of their firm. And that he had a great idea that at Abbeville he should find exactly the sort of demand he was anxious to hit upon; there was nothing in business like occasionally breaking new ground, and dropping on to comparatively out of the way sort of places that would be overlooked by less assiduous rivals; and besides, he added that it might perhaps be as well for him not to remain in Paris just for the present—in fact, until that poor old fellow, whom he had happened to hear was to be brought up from Lyons to be buried at Paris, was comfortably stowed away, and that little affair quite blown over, it might perhaps be more prudent not to be putting oneself too forward.

I really believe he made this excuse more to satisfy my mind at taking him so far out of his way than from any other motive, but I wished much that he had not again alluded to that painful subject. I had been trying to forget it, and drive it out of my mind; and while I was receiving such proofs of friendship and disinterested kindness from him, I could not bear to think, at the same time, of the cold-blooded and careless indifference with which he had himself taken part in, and afterwards talked over, that awful affair.

CHAPTER VI.

TROP TARD! TROP TARD!

It was just noon when we arrived by the morning express at Abbeville; and then, although I had really been unwilling, in spite of his many reasons and assertions, to have trespassed so much upon my friend's good-nature, yet I really cannot think what I could have done, or how I should possibly have got on at all, without him. By the time we had at last reached our destination, my state of nervous excitement and anxiety had come up to that pitch that I should scarcely have been able to have made the necessary inquiries, or even have known where to go, or what to do next. De Lyons, always indefatigable, again took everything entirely upon himself.

There was nothing but one lumbering great omnibus waiting at the station, and therefore, under the impression that we should have to drive some little distance of perhaps a league or two beyond the town, he had at once sent off for a carriage.

But, in the meantime, by making inquiries, he had ascertained that my poor Father had been brought in from the house to which he had first been taken, to the private residence of a Doctor Pointose, which was in the Place d'Armes, in the city of Abbeville.

We drove there at once. Before our vehicle had even pulled up at the door, my eye had been caught instinctively by the two windows of a first-floor room in a particular house, one of which, although it was a biting cold day, was partly open, but the thick blinds therein were drawn closely across.

Although I may say that I had had no hope left since that awful vision of the early morning, yet the observation of that simple, though significant arrangement of those windows crushed the last lingering spark out of my heart with a dull thump, as though of a heavy hammer.

It was the worthy doctor himself who opened the door to us, and guessing at once who we must be, received us with a mournful shake of his head, repeating only two solemn words, "*Trop tard! trop tard!*" I made my way in at once, without any salutation or a single syllable passing between us. I could not have spoken, even if I had attempted to do so: but going on straight up the stairs into the room

above—I needed no direction—found myself immediately in the awful presence of DEATH.

Great God! I wonder now that the tension and strain of my over-excited feelings did not snap my very heart-strings, and that I did not myself fall dead at the foot of that bed on which he lay—the best and dearest of Fathers and truest of friends thus lost to me for ever!

But yet deep and sincere as was the agony of that dreadful moment, I think that the affectionate and sorrowful elements of my mental organization must have become, to a certain degree, numbed and stupified by the weight of their own inordinate pressure, for as I stood gazing earnestly upon those beloved features, I remember that the most distinct impression of which I was for some time really conscious, was that of a vague feeling of curious wonder at the strong and vivid likeness between my dearest Father, as he lay there before me stretched back upon his pillow, and that other poor old man, by whose lifeless corpse I had also within so few hours back been standing; yet, in life, except that their white hair and moustaches might have been perhaps nearly of the same shade, there could really not have been the very slightest resemblance, either of feature or expression,

between them. Yes, it was strange, but that kind of idle wonder was for some time the only feeling I could actually realize!

I cannot tell exactly how long I remained in that room, thus alone with him who was gone; but after a time a kind and gentle lady came in—I hardly know how, for I did not hear or perceive that anyone was near me until she took me softly by the hand, and was kneeling by my side, as I now at last knelt at the bedside, sobbing unrestrainedly like a little child.

She was in the dress of a *sœur de charité*, somewhere between forty and fifty years of age, to judge by her rather plain but very pleasant features, and her voice was peculiarly sweet and low.

I was surprised to hear her address me in very tolerable English; but I subsequently found that she had been for some years an inmate of a convent in this country—in Dorsetshire, I think she told me—and it was for that reason that she had been sent for expressly by Dr. Pontoise to come from Amiens, where she was then living, to wait upon and nurse my poor father.

As, after a time, I gradually became more calm, I received from her a full and detailed account of those most mournful last days which I naturally longed to

hear, although the sad recital again and again renewed the agonies of grief which nearly overpowered me.

She told me that from her first arrival, as soon as my father had discovered that she understood and spoke his own language, he could scarcely bear her to be for a moment out of his sight; that he seemed to have the greatest dread of being left alone with foreign strangers, with whom he could at best but very imperfectly hold any communication, although he frequently acknowledged with thanks the attention and kindness of all those who were around him; that his broken arm had seemed to be healing, and he himself in all respects going on so well that it had been considered quite safe and advisable to remove him from the humble farm-house to which he had at first been conveyed, to that of the excellent doctor who had all along been attending him.

That for two or three days he had certainly appeared to have been even much the better for the change, and there was every hope for his speedy and complete recovery.

On the Wednesday morning, however, he had seemed not so well, and there were certain symptoms about him which, though not absolutely serious, had caused his doctor some anxiety.

All through that night and the next morning he had been very feverish, and at times lightheaded. He was evidently rambling in his sleep, and beset with wild dreams and fancies, and more than once crying aloud in a plaintive voice that his son was stopping to fight a mortal duel, instead of hastening on to see him before he died; or, again, that he was implicated in a murder, and would have to be tried for his life and be executed.

You may imagine how much I was startled, and how I winced when the good sister came to this part of her simple account—the very time, too, so exactly corresponded—but I controlled myself with a strong effort, and let her go on to tell me, as she did, that on the Thursday morning another medical man had been called in for further advice. It was about noon on that day, she was reading to him, as he was constantly requesting her to do, and "as there was no priest of his own less enlightened faith to come to him, he always seemed to be," she added, speaking very softly, and in the simplest manner, "much gratified and soothed in spirit by my own humble prayers, in which he would most fervently join."

They were engaged in thus reading and praying together about midday, when a telegraphic message had arrived, announcing that his son Frank—that is,

of course, myself, you know—would certainly be with him that same night, or in the early morning, by the evening mail-train from Paris, at the latest.

For some hours he had appeared comforted by this news, and more easy, and lay quietly calculating as the time drew nearer, and constantly studying a book of the railways.

The lady showed me a "Bradshaw's Continental Guide," which was still lying on the little bedside table, and in it was the telegraphic dispatch, sent, as I saw, by my Mother herself, and dated from Spezzia.

But as the evening advanced, he had again become restless, and more frequently begged her to send out some one to ascertain whether the train had not yet arrived, and seemed to grow more and more anxious and weary after each fresh disappointment.

He again and again read over that telegram, which he kept in his hand almost to the last, and more than once expressed himself as very unhappy and surprised at the disappointment of his wife,—my Mother, you know—not coming on to him herself.

As the night gradually wore on, and the hour on which he had been all day reckoning at last arrived, and still no tidings, he had fallen into a state of the deepest despondency; and as he lay moaning sadly to

himself, the good sister had read to him some comforting passages from her Book of Devotions.

After a little while he had sent out again for the last time; and she herself had brought in the answer with which the messenger had returned, that the express train from Paris had indeed come in to Abbeville, and gone on, but that there had been no arrival.

Deeply sorrowing to be able to bring him no better news, she was moving towards the bed with the intention of continuing her soothing words of consolation, when he seemed suddenly aroused by some imaginary sounds, which only he himself heard, for all around was still and quiet as the dead of night.

"Who was that laughed just now?" he asked.

No one in the room had heard anything; and then, still rambling in his mind, he went on in a more cheerful tone—

"Hark! hark! I can hear the train which is bringing him along. Now it comes battering along through the silent night;" and then turning round in his bed, with a sudden start that surprised her, as she could scarcely have believed him to have had sufficient strength left for such a movement, he raised himself quite up, and, in a totally different

voice, just as if the person for whom he had been so earnestly longing was standing by him, had cried out—

"Ah, my child, are you here at last? but too late—too late. Why has not your Mother also arrived? God bless you both. Adieu."

And falling back upon his pillow, with one very deep-drawn sigh, had ceased to breathe for ever.

"Who else heard those sounds?" I asked her, eagerly. "Tell me, Madame, who else was in the room? Who was it holding his pulse?"

"Doctor Pontoise was also here besides myself, and Amélie, the housekeeper," she answered.

"And I also," I exclaimed; "I myself was present to receive those last sad words. You may not be able to comprehend me, Madame," I went on to say, as I noticed the sad but incredulous expression of the gaze which she fixed upon me; "but I assure you that I speak nothing but the truth, and can even prove it to you, being able, as I am, to tell you the exact minute at which the facts of which you have been telling me took place, as I myself marked it by the timepiece in this room. At twenty-three minutes before four;—tell me, was not that the exact hour?" I cried, with a fresh burst of passionate grief.

The lady directed my attention to a large clock upon the mantel-piece, which, from the position I happened to have taken, had been hidden by the curtain at the head of the bed.

It was of a peculiar style and pattern, and I recognised it instantly as the identical clock by which I had noted the time when I had previously been in that room in spirit only.

The holy sister did not seem at all to meet my meaning, but informed me that, according to a not unusual custom of her country, she had herself stopped the pendulum of the clock within half a minute of my dear father's last sigh.

The whole sixty minutes were marked in numbers round the dial. The hour hand was at 18, the other long minute one pointed between 37 and 38, twenty-two minutes and a half to four exactly.

CHAPTER VII.

PRIVATE FAMILY AFFAIRS.

I HAVE but a confused and indistinct remembrance of how those four or five days passed away during which space of time it was necessary for us to stay on at Abbeville. There was much to be done, but De Lyons relieved me of all bother and difficulty; he seemed to think of everything, just as if he were quite accustomed to such responsibility, and acted accordingly, without even coming to trouble me about any of the minor details and arrangements.

He had telegraphed off at once to Genoa, to Colonel De Lorme, and also to my poor father's lawyers in London, Messrs. Wyley, McKraft and Co.

Upon my mentioning the names of that respected firm, *Taraxacum* pricked his ears and assumed a very knowing look, but I was so full of other thoughts at the time, that I did not ask whether he had ever happened to hear of them before.

The good sister Agatha had told us that, upon more

than one occasion my Father had expressed a wish, in case of his not recovering the effects of his accident, that he should not be taken home to England, but be laid in the cemetery of Père la Chaise, at Paris, in, or as near as possible to the same spot where his own mother and a beloved sister had been already buried—a fact, by-the-bye, of which I was not previously aware.

I found a faintly-scrawled pencil note, to the same effect, inserted between the leaves of his Bible.

Neither Mr. Wyley nor his partner were able to come out to Abbeville themselves; but they sent a junior representative of their firm, the most elaborately got up dandified specimen of an East-end gent, a Mr. Jacob Wrascall, towards whom at first sight even I took a most unmitigated dislike, in which my friend De Lyons, who had more personal communications with him than myself, fully participated.

I felt quite certain that I had seen that man somewhere before; his voice and peculiar would-be-fashionable drawl were somehow quite familiar to me; but for the life of me I could not remember when or where. I begged De Lyons to "pump" him on the subject, who accordingly found an opportunity of asking him, as if casually, whether he had ever met me before.

After a pause of consideration, rather longer even

than his usually infernal affectation required, he had answered, that he might have done so, in Italy, and seemed disinclined to be more communicative on the subject, so *Taraxacum*, of whom he was very jealous, and who detesting him as much as I did, had constantly snubbed him, had not cared to press the question further.

It was necessary to turn out my father's private writing-case, in which his lawyers suggested that we should probably find his will.

He had only finally signed it the very day before he had left England, and they fancied must have taken it with him. In making the search I came upon his pocket-book, still unclasped, in which was his diary, written up as it was to the very last moment before embarking on the steamer for Boulogne. It showed evidently that he had been beguiling the time at some hotel at Folkestone, for the small space allotted to that day was thus filled up :—

"Tuesday, 20th (October).—Up early, everything packed up and ready to start as I intended at 9.45 from London Bridge—cab at door, when delayed by message from W. and McK.'s (confound 'em)—they had let me forget to sign consent to C. M.'s marrying little G. the dwarf (no accounting for tastes, par-

ticularly young ladies')—for poor ~~dear~~ Carry's sake I should have liked to have seen the girl once—but thus delayed, just missed the morning train—came on by twelve o'clock slow—stopped kicking my heels here at Folkestone—bad dinner—wine worse—don't know what to do with myself till boat starts at half-past eleven P.M. to-night."

There was the lawyer's letter between the pages of the pocket-book in which the above entry was made.

"Sharper's Row, Red Lion Square, October 19th, 1851.

"My Dear Sir,—Upon entering a memorandum of the various papers which had been laid before you for your signature, when I had the honour of waiting upon you this afternoon, we are sorry to discover that among the great number of folios we had inadvertently passed over that on which your official consent had, according to your instructions, been notified, to the intended marriage of your ward Miss Caroline Duffa. Although the young lady is, as you observed, past her twenty-first year, it is necessary, according to the terms of her late mother's bequest, as well as her great uncle's will, that she should have the consent, in writing, of her trustees to any matrimonial engagement in which she may propose to enter, before any further steps can be taken for a resettlement of the sum of

8000*l.*, to the interest of which she is by those wills entitled.

"The alliance which she now contemplates, with the full sanction and advice of the lady by whom she has been brought up, Mrs. Muddelled, of St. Peter's, Guernsey, is one that must be considered most eligible by all who have any interest in the young lady's future happiness and welfare; we have given orders to our clerk to wait upon you at an early hour in the morning, and as he will not need to detain you for more than five minutes, we trust that he will not interfere with your arrangements for starting for the Continent.

"We remain, my dear sir,

"Your very obedient and obliged servants,

"For self and partner,

"C. WYLEY."

"To Lt.-Gen. Lambard, C.B., &c."

"And so, my dear fellow, you were quite right after all," broke out De Lyons, when, having by that time pretty well taken him into my entire confidence, I had shown him that last entry in my father's journal and the lawyer's letter with it. "Had it not been for that delay," I had just before been saying, "my dear father might have been alive with us in Florence now, well and happy."

"Yes, and only to think that he should again have contrived to be at the bottom of it!" De Lyons went on, while I was still speaking; and he then stopped short, as if surprised that I did not seem immediately to have caught his meaning.

I begged him to explain himself; but he seemed unwilling to do so.

"You may as well tell me," I said, "at least, to whom you are alluding"—and I pressed him to do so.

"Why, don't you see, then," he said, "to whom that unfortunate letter which—as ill luck would have it—made your poor father just miss the train by which he had originally arranged to come refers? If you put two and two together, cannot you make out who that eligible young party must be with whom the young lady in question is to be permitted to contract so desirable an alliance?"

I still stared at him.

"You seem, somehow, to know more of my family affairs than I do myself—how, I don't know," I remarked, rather testily; for I was for the moment mean and ungrateful enough to half suspect my friend of having been poking his nose into papers and matters in which he had no business.

"Oh!" continued *Taraxacum* (I trust not guessing

my unworthy suspicion), "perhaps I forget to mention that he had told me McKraft was the name of his uncle, who had written out for him in such a hurry to go home to be married."

"Uncle?—him?—he? Who are you talking about?" I asked.

Taraxacum uttered no sound in reply—but by the motion of his lips I read, as he spelt the letters of the name, G-O-R-L-E-S; for he perceived, which I did not, that Mr. Wrascall had at the very moment silently entered the room.

Yes, it was indeed too true—as from the bitterness of my soul I had cried out and given expression to the thought which had haunted me, and then strangely enough, had gone again out of my head. This, the heaviest calamity of all, had indeed been brought upon me again by the blighting influence of Gorles—again in addition to the fact of his having, still by the same indirect and apparently quite accidental effect upon my destinies, contrived my delay, and thus prevented my having been in time to have perhaps even revived my dear father by my presence, or, at any rate, to have consoled his last moments, and had the melancholy gratification of receiving his last sigh and blessing in person.

"I cannot quite make out now the great object in

that move of theirs," said De Lyons, that evening renewing the subject, when we were alone: "8000*l.*, though a very comfortable little sum in the abstract, is by no means such a tremendous fortune after all—though, I suppose as much as Master Gorles, or, at any rate, his pettifogging old uncle, who probably is nearer the mark in a correct estimation of his merits, might think him likely to get. Yet still there is the fact of sending for him express all that way, and the evident importance in obtaining your father's legal consent. There is something yet more at the bottom of that affair than we quite see, depend upon it. Our pocket-companion mentioned large expectations, I now remember—to be sure; and he said that the fortunate young lady was a connexion of yours. If it is not a very impertinent question, pray who is this Miss Duffa, who is about to make this most desirable alliance? I wonder whether she has ever seen her intended!"

I had at that time but a very vague idea myself in regard to the young lady. Every family, they say, has its own private *skeleton in the cupboard;* and that connexion was ours, or at least, one of our *skeletons*. She was, I believe, the daughter of a first cousin of my Father's, to whom he had in former days been devotedly attached, and for some time engaged

to be married. On the very eve of their marriage, Carry Fane—that was her name—(her mother, you see, was a Miss Lambard, my grandfather's only sister)—had been induced to run away with, and was married at Gretna Green to, a Major Duffa, who was in my father's own regiment, and whom, having always trusted as one of his best and most intimate friends, he had himself introduced to his affianced bride. The General, or Captain, as he then was, had called out Duffa, and had enjoyed the grim satisfaction of crippling him for life.

After some four or five years of misery and unhappiness, Duffa had drunk himself to death, and within about eighteen months after, his wife had died also—leaving one little girl, whom she had confided in a last letter to my father—having appointed him the sole guardian and trustee for the money which luckily had not fallen in to her until after her wretched husband's death.

My Father had wished to adopt the poor little orphan, but my Mother, to whom he had at that time been only married about two years, would never hear of it, and indeed had so worked upon him, as to make him promise never even to see the child. My dear Mother was always the most loving and devoted of wives, and the most virtuous of women, but, like the

dear creatures in general, rather too apt to carry everything, either for good or evil, into extremes: her love and devotion amounted to a very few degrees below monomaniacal jealousy, and her virtue especially developed itself in the most unforgiving, unmitigated severity for any of the weaknesses of her own sex, of whom, strange to say, being so very strait-laced herself, she had, as a general rule, the very worst possible opinion.

My poor Father (very unwillingly, I believe) gave the promise, but having done so, always stuck to his word; and so all necessary communication, or rather provision for education, and so on, had always been done through his lawyers, who had seen to appointing a proper governess and companion for the poor girl, who had been since brought up where her parents had died—not in the West Indies, as De Lyons had reported, but the Channel Islands.

In short, it was an unhappy story altogether, and a subject to which I never heard either my father or mother even allude in the most distant manner. Indeed, what I did at that time know about it, had been gathered from the gossip of our old family nurse, whom I overheard telling the tale to the lady's-maid over the nursery-fire one evening, when I was a little chap of about seven or eight years old, and supposed

to be safe asleep in my little bed at the end of the room. I had quite forgotten it for years, but the mention of the name of "poor Carry" in my father's diary brought it all back to me."

CHAPTER VIII.

JACOB WRASCALL, GENT.

THERE was nothing worth recording in our melancholy journey up to Paris, whither we had dispatched Mr. Wrascall on before us, to make all the necessary arrangements.

We were only too glad to get rid of that very obnoxious snob; while he, on his part, seemed equally pleased to have a chance of changing the dullness of Abbeville, of which he had more than once actually had the bad taste to complain, for the more genial excitements of the gay capital.

We even strongly suspected him of having purposely made himself all the more personally obnoxious, with the express view of being sent on earlier than he perhaps otherwise would have been; for he was constantly boring me with his complaints as to the indifference of the living and accommodation at the hotel; not to speak of his officiousness, and repeated endeavours to set De Lyons and myself

against one another by his abominable lies, and many underhand inuendoes.

When we ourselves arrived at Paris, we found my mother, her sister, and Colonel De Lorme already arrived, and pretty well recovered from the fatigues of their journey from Genoa.

They seemed at first disposed to meet me with greater cordiality and kindness than when I had parted from them; but, unfortunately, they took it into their heads to conceive a strong prejudice, and to refuse to show even common civility, to my friend De Lyons.

That I could not stand. I told them exactly what that kind fellow had really been to me, and all that he had done for me in my trouble.

My aunt, would you believe it, really had the face and bad feeling, in so many words to impute all his kindness to certain most interested motives. That was, however, too much to bear calmly; I was disgusted beyond measure, and I just told them as much in pretty plain terms.

Taraxacum, poor fellow, indeed expressed his wish to leave me, now, as he said, that he could be of no further use to me; but I would not hear of it, and went off to another hotel with him, where I could be free from the petty malice, and unfounded insinuations of my own relatives.

I went, however, in the course of the evening to the Hôtel Bristol, hoping for a quiet talk with my Mother, and to make her at least listen to reason, besides having to settle about the hour, and other necessary preliminaries, for the funeral next morning; and there, I could hardly believe my eyes on beholding that horrid "gent," Mr. Jacob Wrascall, sitting at the tea-table with them!

"Here, Frank," cried my aunt, immediately ready for a "turn up" at me, "you choose to treat our judgment and opinion with contempt, here is Mr. Rascally Jacobs, who, as a man of the world, knows everybody and everything about society, thinks just as we do of your ill-chosen, particular friend, Mr. Lyons—Mr. '*Jackall,*' he was just saying, he thinks he ought rather to be called—and that he cannot conceive how any gentleman in your position can find pleasure in the low company of a travelling man, or a *comic voyager,* as he calls him."

Mr. J. Wrascall on seeing me walk deliberately round the table towards where he was seated, with his mouth half full of hot roll and butter, had suddenly turned very white about the gills, and shuffling up on to his legs, contrived nearly to tumble backwards over his own chair. I felt strongly tempted to just knock

him head over heels, or at least to catch hold of him by those exaggerated red whiskers he was so proud of, and shake him until some of those gleaming teeth of his were loose in his gums. But, thanks be! I remembered in time that I was in the presence of my own widowed Mother, who, half raised from her sofa, seemed struck speechless with fright and anticipation of a regular row.

"No Mother, I wont touch him," I said, in answer to her mute appeal; "but at the same time an impudent attorney's clerk is not fit company for you, particularly when he so far forgets his proper position as to presume to offer his opinions in regard to your son's friends. Now then, be off," I said, as, instead of assaulting him, I handed him his bran-new shiny hat, "and if ever I hear you daring to offer any opinion either about myself or my affairs again, I shall be apt to pay you the equivalent of your legal charge of six-and-eightpence in a shape you may perhaps not relish. Now, make yourself scarce." And he vanished out of the room like a dog with his tail between his legs.

The old Colonel began at first to puff and bluster a bit at my treatment of his guest, but I offered no apology; and, to tell the truth, I believe the old gentleman had himself already protested against the

young jackanapes being invited ; but my aunt, who had been taken by his shiny appearance, and would-be fashionable slip-slop, had persisted in declaring that he ought to be asked.

CHAPTER IX.

PÈRE LA CHAISE.

I HAD tried very hard to persuade my poor Mother over-night, not to put so great a trial on her over-shaken nerves and feelings as to think of coming with us to the cemetery, to attend my poor Father's remains to the grave. But she would not be persuaded.

We had tried to compromise with her, by suggesting that she should accompany us as far as the Protestant church, and from thence coming back with my aunt, leave us men to go on alone through the last sad scene at the actual place of burial.

It was no use, she firmly insisted; and so, although dreading the effect which the effort might have upon her, we were forced to yield. Everything had been arranged to be as simple and quiet as actual decorum would allow, our unpretending procession consisted of two plain mourning carriages, in the first of which were my mother, my aunt and myself; in the other, the Colonel, De Lyons—upon whose invitation I had

stoutly insisted—the Clergyman and Mr. Wrascall. When we had at last reached the gates of Père la Chaise, there arrived almost at the very same moment another gorgeous funeral procession, which, by the number of the carriages and attendants on horse and foot, with all sorts of heraldic pomp, and the paraphernalia of the Catholic church, evidently betokened the last honours of some personage of considerable wealth and distinction.

There was an immense crowd gathered round, attracted by the splendour of this show, some of whom, as they were crushed back against our vehicle—which was drawn on one side to allow the other other more pretentious line to pass in unbroken—looking in at us, began to indulge in low and brutal remarks upon the fact of our being English and heretics.

My poor Mother and her sister became, not wholly without cause, violently alarmed. I put my head out of the window, and beckoning to De Lyons to come to us from the other carriage behind, begged him to go forward and ascertain, if he could, for how long we should probably be thus detained, and also to get the assistance of a *gendarme* or two, some of whom we saw further on posted about the gates, in order that we might be protected from the annoyance and insults of the rabble. I apologized at the same time

for thus troubling him; but that attorney fellow who, of course, ought to have seen to the management of everything, was worse than useless, from his extremely limited acquaintance with the language; though, as I found afterwards, he especially prided himself upon being able to say off the whole manual of "French and English Conversation made Easy" by rote: but as the pronunciation was entirely according to his own conception of what it ought to be, he had not found the study of that valuable work of any great practical advantage to himself in his intercourse with those natives who did not "*spik Inglis.*"

De Lyons assured us that our detention would not be for much longer, as nothing but the hearse—or, rather, funeral car as it was—could be allowed to pass into the cemetery; the carriages were setting down as fast as possible, and that in a very few minutes the other procession would be formed, and move on, leaving the way clear for us.

"The two will not interfere with one another," he continued, speaking softly, "for I came up here myself last evening to ascertain the exact spot; and as the English Protestants have a quarter specially set apart for themselves, the probability is that we shall find that the other ceremony will take place in some quite different direction."

He kindly went on, however, to speak to the police authorities, and when in a few minutes our carriage moved slowly on, and he returned to the carriage-door, ready to offer my mother an arm to assist her in descending, I was struck with astonishment at his appearance.

His face was the colour of a sheet, he was so ghastly pale; and as he leant against the carriage-door for support, I saw that it was as much as he could do to hold himself up. My poor Mother, too much absorbed in her own grief, did not notice this extraordinary and sudden change. But my aunt, carefully abstaining from any sort of recognition of even poor De Lyons' presence, and gathering the flounces of her dress close round her, as if their very skirts might be contaminated by even touching him, swept by with a glance which spoke whole volumes; and as she seized upon her husband's arm, I distinctly heard the words, "shameful intoxication," emanate from those indignant lips.

As I gave my Mother my arm, and De Lyons passed close to me to take his place behind, he looked at me for an instant with a wild and hesitating glance, seemed half inclined to whisper something, and then, as if changing his mind, only stammered out—"Be prepared;" and then with a palpable stagger in his gait,

which really almost justified my aunt's uncharitable view of his strange behaviour, stepped back to the side of Mr. Wrascall in the rear.

As De Lyons had predicted, before he had been affected by the curious change which had come over him, we were, upon entering the cemetery, directed to a different avenue than that by which the other *cortège* had passed on; but upon mounting the winding paths, we found, by a strange coincidence, that we were again brought to within a few paces of one another.

The vault which, as I think I have mentioned, was already occupied by some members of our family, happened to be situated at the very extreme end of the English quarter, and, although approached by a totally distinct route, was, if not quite exactly opposite, only just separated by the width of the main avenue from the corner which was occupied by the stately and imposing mausoleum which was the destination of the other funeral. So that had our party consisted of anything like the same numbers, it must have amalgamated with theirs, and have become all mingled together.

I tried my best to compose my thoughts, and to concentrate them wholly upon the solemn and affecting ritual in which we were ourselves engaged. Pay-

ing, as we were, the last sad token of respect to Him who had been cut off from us in so awfully sudden a manner, and whose memory, indeed, deserved all—and more than all—the deep affection and veneration which I had with all my heart entertained for it.

But still, in spite of myself, my eyes wandered across to the other side; my attention was distracted; and I could not help contrasting our quiet, but very solemn service, with all the pomp and outward ceremony which was there going on; when all of a sudden my sight was caught by the name which, emblazoned upon a scroll or escutcheon among the ponderous ornamentation which crowned the structure, told me to what family that stately mausoleum belonged.

Though the coronets and heraldic bearings had been knocked away and damaged, and the gilding of the inscription itself was tarnished and dim, yet the name itself appeared as if in letters of flame; and that name was De Tison.

Now, then, I knew the cause of De Lyons' sudden paleness and agitation.

As the real truth thus struck me, like a sudden blow, before I had hardly time fairly to take it in as a fact, I at that very moment felt my arm violently clutched by De Lyons, who had been standing close behind me the whole time.

"Good Heavens! look there," he whispered, as if involuntarily; and then with an expression of extreme agitation went on—"No, never mind, don't —for your own sake, for Heaven's sake, don't turn round."

I did look round, naturally, and guided by his transfixed gaze, I beheld—though scarcely able to trust my own senses—nothing less than Gorles himself sitting perched up on high, on the corner-stone of a lofty monument, which about equally commanded both the funerals, evidently enjoying the result of his own demoniacal powers and machinations with all the intense interest and exultation of a regular Mephistopheles.

"Well, at any rate, I am glad that he is in for it, too," De Lyons muttered, between his clenched teeth. "If I could only give him the office to try to bolt, he might perhaps lead them off, and give us, or at least you, a chance of a start. But it's no use, Frank; you must get your mother down to the carriage, and off at once, without alarming her," he whispered; "but you yourself must stay behind. They have only allowed us to go through the ceremony undisturbed on that condition."

He had no time to explain himself more clearly, but catching his meaning at once—just as one candle

takes a light from another—I instinctively divined all that was in his mind, and that he had to tell me, in an instant.

As I turned to support my poor mother down the steep pathway, I just caught a glimpse of two grim-looking *Gendarmes*, sauntering at a little distance behind us, but watching every motion; and within three minutes afterwards, as a lower turn in our circuitous descent again afforded a view of the spot we had been occupying, I perceived a commotion in the crowd, and Gorles, having evidently been summoned to descend from his elevated position by two of the myrmidons of the law, was dodging round and round the huge urn on the top of the monument, exactly like a hunted cat.

As he solemnly declared afterwards to De Lyons, it was perfectly accidental his happening to be at that place at all. He had been detained in Paris against his will, and prevented going on, as he had intended, at once home to England, by the loss of his portmanteau, which, as we had ourselves witnessed, had been stolen by the audacious driver of the *fiacre*, which had brought him from the railway station; and he was merely killing time by visiting the celebrated "Père la Chaise," when his attention had been particularly attracted by the two funerals, not having the

slightest idea with whom either one or the other of them were connected; but, that his fancy had been tickled by the fact of the two ceremonies of the rival religions going on at the same time, so closely within hearing and sight of one another.

CHAPTER X.

LE PROCÈS D'ACCUSATION — A COMPARATIVE RELIEF FROM POSITIVE FRIGHT.

I MANAGED to get my mother down to the entrance-gates without her having perceived or suspecting anything, and putting her into the carriage with my uncle and aunt, while I made some excuse for myself, with a half-muttered promise of following them immediately, gave orders to their coachman to drive them back to their hotel; and then turning round, we found ourselves face to face with the police, who had quietly been following us down behind.

"*Messieurs*," said De Lyons, raising his hat with most uncommon politeness, but I suppose, thinking it wisest to propitiate the enemy to the best of our power, "this gentleman, my friend here, and myself, have to acknowledge your great forbearance and courtesy, in allowing us to disembarrass ourselves of the presence of the ladies, without adding to their already overwhelming sorrows by further alarm. And

now perhaps you will explain what it is you require of us, for we are wholly unable to form even the least conception in this quite unexpected affair?"

De Lyons had by this time quite recovered his usual *sang froid,* and had indeed assumed a tone of almost exaggerated dignity, and high-flown style of injured innocence. The *gendarme* whom he thus specially addressed, only shrugged up his worsted epaulets, and twitching up his moustaches, intimated in rather a surly voice, that he knew no more than that he had orders to conduct us to the *Commissaire de police,* who had given permission to allow us to go through the funeral ceremony without disturbing us, as long as we made no attempt to escape, but was now awaiting us in the office of the intendant of the cemetery, to which he begged us to accompany himself and his comrade without more delay. To which very polite invitation, not being able very well to help ourselves, we acceded with the greatest apparent willingness.

"You, as Mr. Lambard's legal adviser, had better come with us," De Lyons suggested, with great presence of mind to Wrascall, who was standing all this time with his great dull eyes and mouth stretched open to their widest; "you may be of some use in conveying a message to the embassy, or to his friends,

if we find ourselves likely to be detained, as perhaps we shall be."

We had only a few yards to walk to the intendant's house, round which a considerable crowd was gathered, whose immediate object and attraction we soon perceived upon being ushered in; for there we found Gorles, who had just been brought in from the other side, while we had been occupied with seeing my Mother and the others into the carriage.

He was held in the powerful grasp of two stout gendarmes, struggling in the most violent way, all the while cursing and swearing, kicking, spitting and almost foaming at the mouth with impotent rage.

"Be quiet, can't you, you d——d little fool," roared *Taraxacum* at the top of his voice at him, losing all patience. "It is entirely through you that we are now brought into this hobble, and you will only get us and yourself worse in for it, by making such an egregious idiot of yourself."

The *Commissaire*, who was at a table in the corner of the room, writing away busily with all his might, without paying much heed to Gorles' obstreperous behaviour, as if he were quite used to such vagaries, cocked up his ears at this adjuration. I thought by the smirk on his face that he understood it, though it was spoken in English, but he continued to scribble

away again on a fresh folio-page more assiduously than before.

"*Monsieur Commissaire,*" said De Lyons, in a very respectful manner, "we are somewhat pressed for time, and, monsieur my friend here," pointing to myself, "is especially anxious to rejoin his family at their hotel, who are, as perhaps you may be aware, at this present time mourning under afflictions of no common severity. We shall therefore feel much obliged if you would have the goodness to inform us upon what charge we have thus been arrested and brought before you, and in respect to which, even before we have heard its nature, we have no doubt that you will find you have been labouring under some entire misapprehension."

The *Commissaire* looked up from his table, and glared at us fiercely for some seconds; then without deigning a reply, finished the last few lines of his writing, signed it with a magnificent flourish, wiped his pen in the bristly hair at the back of his head, and then sucked it carefully, having finished which process to his entire satisfaction, he suddenly announced—

"Prisoners, the charge against you is—*Conspiration*—feel assured that there can be no sort of misapprehension in the matter."

He stared at us keenly, as though clearly to observe the effect of this declaration, and then set to work again as if to make further notes of the result of his observation, which we felt no doubt would be brought up with the rest of the evidence against us.

I was myself too astonished to do more than gasp out the word after him—*Conspiration ! Taraxacum* gave a start of surprise, and then, as if a visible burden had been removed from off his shoulders, his whole tone and manner changed immediately to that of the most free and easy chaff, and incredulous banter.

"So!" he ejaculated with a sort of whistle, "that's all, is it?—*Est-il possible*? perhaps *Monsieur* will inform us upon what absurd pretence so grave a charge is brought against us, and when, where, and against whom, we can be suspected or accused of having conspired. My friend here, and myself," he continued, in the same easy fashion, "you may perhaps not be aware, only arrived at Paris yesterday forenoon from Abbeville, as we can easily prove by incontestible evidence."

"Silence, prisoner," said the *Commissaire*, waxing very wroth; "this is neither the occasion nor the place for any irrelevant remarks on the part of criminals in your position."

"In England," answered De Lyons, "no person is considered——"

"Silence, instantly; there is no question here of England, we are at present in France."

"*Tant pis pour nous,*" said *Taraxacum,* with his usual impudence.

The *Commissaire* looked as if he would like to annihilate him, though condescending to make no further answer than to mutter audibly to himself—

"*Parbleu, mes messieurs,* you have much of reason there."

After another long pause of consideration, the "jack in office" thought fit to announce that as a special indulgence to our prejudices as Englishmen and foreigners, he would so far condescend as to read over to us without further delay the *procès d'accusation* against us, though at the same time impressing upon us that this was an act of gratuitous liberality on his part, being not the least obligatory or even usual to persons who like ourselves had been guilty of such heinous crimes.

My private impression was, that he was only too delighted to have the opportunity of reading out his own voluminious composition, which was as long as my arm.

So, without further preliminary, he set to work.

Now I have always rather piqued myself upon my familiarity with the French tongue—I ought to know it, for when a little child my mother had lived for four or five years at Versailles, while my father was with his regiment in India, so that I talked French with my *bonne* before I did English.

But, hang me! if I could understand one quarter of what it was all about—as the fellow sang it out in one monotonous note through his nose, running on without much apparent reference to stops, except when requiring to take in breath, or occasionally throwing back his head with a critical air, he would take his pen to improve some phrase, or give a happier turn to the end of a sentence—occasionally, also, looking up to watch the effect upon us culprits, when he arrived at any specially damning clause.

Taraxacum perceiving this, by way of assuring him of our entire innocence, so awfully overdid the part by his extravagant contortions of astonishment and indignation—skipping from one pantomimic attitude to another—that serious and sorrowful as I had so lately felt, and still had cause to feel, it was all I could do to keep myself from bursting out laughing at him.

The real fact is, we were comparatively jolly under the circumstances—the natural effect, no doubt, of the reaction, and intense relief to our minds at finding

that we had been only hauled up, after all, upon an unfounded accusation, and some total misapprehension, and not, as we had of course at first imagined and feared, on any suspicion connected with the death of the unfortunate Vicomte, whose funeral we had by so strange a coincidence been brought to witness, almost, you might say, attend at personally.

Though I could by no means follow the whole rigmarole closely, from the extraordinary reading of the *Commissaire*, yet I could make out just enough of what it was all about, to learn, that we stood accused of having arrived at Paris as secret emissaries, connected with the "Carbonari," or some of those ultra-revolutionary gentry in Italy—"on whom the authorities, whom nothing could escape, happily had their eyes"—to conspire and arrange revolutionary plots, with other "miserable malcontents" of our own supposed political views, now concealed in that capital, with the expressed purpose of attacking and upsetting the existing order of things, which at that time was recognised as the French Republic, one and indivisible; and then there occurred an interpolation of at least a page or two, folio, to the effect that the said institution—*i.e.*, the existing republic—"was surely destined to last and flourish to the end of all future ages, notwithstanding all such cowardly and dastardly attempts

on the part of those who, like the miscreants now before him (meaning ourselves), envied and crouched before her greatness, firmly grounded as she was upon the triple and imperishable foundations of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité !"* Here the *Commissaire* rolled about his words in his mouth, and his eyes in their sockets, quite carried away in the most intense admiration of his own transcendent powers of composition : I don't know whether those fellows are paid by the line or not.

Well, the long and the short of it all was, that the Government—"ever eagle-eyed and paternal," or maternal, I forget which, by-the-bye—had received certain information that three Englishmen had arrived in France, bringing with them treasonable correspondence and letters addressed to suspected parties from Florence and Leghorn.

Suspicions, it seems, had been directed against us, as we eventually, though not till afterwards, ascertained, through telegraph, which had been sent denouncing Gorles to the authorities, by his precious friend the Contessa, who turned out to be, amongst her other accomplishments, a spy in the pay of the French Government.

Further intimation had been forwarded from Marseilles and Lyons, that the said emissary had been

joined by two other Englishmen, who, by trying to represent themselves as entire strangers to one another, and a more than usual exaggeration of insular eccentricities, were no doubt seeking to delude and lull the vigilance of the police from the real object of their journey.

In consequence of the express denouncement of the principal agent in this plot, the valise—"which had quite providentially been stolen, and since fallen into the hands of the police"—had been examined, and no less than three letters, which he had been idiot enough to take charge of, had been found in Gorles's own writing-case contained therein.

"Out of the frying-pan into the fire!" said *Taraxacum* to me aside, in German, which evidently not a little puzzled the *Commissaire*, who, as I have said, I suspect understood English.

Gorles himself, all this while, stood apart, between two *gendarmes*, now tolerably quiet, but looking as glum as a muzzled bear.

It appeared that they had been dodging him day after day, feeling him quite safe in their power, and waiting for a chance of catching him in actual communication with his accomplices in treason, and so making a pounce upon all three of us together.

Notwithstanding all their boasted vigilance and

secret information. De Lyons and I, by passing through Paris, as we had done, at once to Abbeville, had quite unintentionally thrown them off our scent and puzzled them; and nothing we could protest or declare to the contrary, would persuade them that we had not been all that time concealed somewhere in Paris itself. I really believe that even if we, as we might easily have done, had proved by respectable witnesses the truth of our assertion, the *Commissaire*, and those of his satellites who had had our case in charge, would have rather believed that the Préfet of Abbeville, the doctor, and half a score more, were all guilty of perjury, than that they could possibly be wrong in the special report which they had drawn up, and would have felt bound to stick to.

The voluminous *procès* wound up by calling the attention of the Court—to whom, I suppose, it was intended to be eventually addressed, and the world in general—to the evidently special interposition of that Providence which, "on this as on all other occasions, had manifested its favours and entire appreciation of the French Republic in preference to all other forms of earthly government," by bringing us, as it had, all three at the same time to that particular spot to which, as it happened, they had only followed one of us, so that we should all fall at one swoop into the clutches

of those authorities against whom we had been so iniquitously plotting and devising our infamous designs.

A postscript further directed particular official notice to be taken of the evident agitation of the conscience-stricken De Lyons upon being first accosted by the *gendarmes*; also his remark to Gorles had been duly noted down, as clearly establishing our criminal complicity, when confronted with that accomplice of our guilt in the presence of the *Commissaire*.

In short, as *Taraxaeum* remarked, "they had succeeded in discovering a rare specimen of the *nidus equinus*, or mare's-nest, and now, had nothing to do but to hatch and then cook its contents to their own perfect satisfaction.

CHAPTER XI.

A FRIEND AT COURT.

"WHAT will all this end in?" I asked my companion in trouble, when, having without making any objection given all the required particulars as to our names, ages, parentage, means of living, and so on, we were handed over to the custody of a cocked-hatted official apiece; first, to be taken to our own hotel—which favour had not, however, been acceded to without some demur—there to have our personal luggage and effects overhauled and examined, to which process we had expressed ourselves perfectly willing to afford them every facility, as well as to find our passports; by which we were prepared to prove, at least the truth of our having been to Abbeville, which the *Commissaire* chose to dispute and deny.

"What will all this end in?" I asked, as we were driving along in the mourning carriage, which had been all the while waiting for us, an attendant *gendarme* having taken his place inside with us, whilst

another was perched outside upon the coach-box by the side of the driver.

"Why, very likely no end of bother and inconvenience," replied De Lyons; "probably in the shape of a long confinement in some beastly prison before we are even brought to any trial, or given a chance of proving ourselves innocent, unless we can get the English minister to interfere.

"I gave Wrascall the office to start off at once, and see if he could get hold of Lightlocks, the *attaché*, who knew us both at Eton; which may give him a slightly additional interest in our misfortunes. And your old uncle, the Colonel, must also be prevailed upon to go personally to the embassy to let them know who you are, and what is the real state of the case.

"He is, luckily, of position enough to make them more likely attend to him; for, as a general rule, if they had to interfere in every case, in which Englishmen have got into scrapes, and been shut up in limbo, they would have enough to do; and even double their present staff would not be able to get through that daily branch of diplomatic business alone.

"But the fact is, as I was told only last evening by a man here, who knows always pretty well what is going on, that on all sides they are daily expecting an outbreak somewhere, another regular

turn-up and revolution, but from what quarter, or where the blow is to come from exactly, no one seems to know, or to be able to conjecture ; that it is which makes the authorities of the present hour so suspicious and only too ready to pounce upon any one within their reach, friend or stranger, with or without any apparent reason——

"Holloa ! by Jove, look there—it's himself, old Zauber, the Professor—hi ! stop, I tell you, *cocher ! arrêtez donc,*" and before the *gendarme* could stop him, De Lyons had flung open the coach-door, and springing over the unfolded steps like a harlequin, was down on the pavement, nearly overthrowing the astonished Professor by the violence of his embrace. The *gendarme* by the time he had recovered himself, and his mouth was shut again, first seized me violently by the throat, and began to ram my head vehemently into the corner of the carriage.

I was so taken aback that I had not even presence of mind to hit out at him in return for this most unprovoked attack ; but I of course expected a general row, a struggle, drawn-swords, handcuffs and all the rest of it, with the probability of a hooting mob of street ruffians to escort us to our hotel, and thence to our prison, instead of going on quietly and unremarked as we might have done.

"What a confounded reckless fool the fellow is, for we shall be sure to come off all the worse for this!" I ejaculated in my vexation; but there I was wrong altogether.

No sooner did the ferocious official, who, having left his hold on me, and clumsily extricating himself from the coach, was striding after his escaped prisoner, seem to recognise the person of the Professor, than his whole demeanour, as well as that of his companion in arms, who had in the meantime rolled himself and his huge boots and his clanking sword off the coach-box, instantly and entirely underwent a marked change.

"Halt, Sergeant Scarran!" cried the Professor, evidently recognising that official and addressing him by name, "this gentleman is one of my most intimate friends."

The sergeant, to my immense astonishment, began to apologize, and with a most deferential manner to explain, that though he was bound to carry out his duty, and not to allow his prisoner to escape from his sight, yet that any person who had the great honour of being numbered among the personal friends of Monsieur le Docteur, might rely upon receiving every attention and complaisance, compatible with the circumstances, while in his custody, which, he now added with a sort of a bow and very meaning smile,

he hoped, and would venture to say, would not probably be for long.

Not being myself on the same terms of intimacy with the mysterious Professor—nor indeed, upon the whole, having overmuch reason to look back with any pleasure to our only strange evening spent together and its consequences—I remained where I was in the carriage; though I was civil enough, and made no hesitation about accepting his proffered hand, when after eight or ten minutes' earnest colloquy De Lyons brought him up to the carriage-door, grinning, and his strange eyes gleaming more brightly than ever through his spectacles.

"Rely upon it, all will end well, my dear friends—I can see to this mistake being rectified at once; as even now I am on the way to the Elysée," he said, confidentially, as, De Lyons and our attendant having retaken their places, we were just moving on again.

It was a perfect caution to observe the change in the official's manner towards us—from being surly and short in his answers to the few remarks we had made to him, the rascal had become quite deferential, and seemed anxious to conciliate and impress us with his deep interest in our welfare.

"If Messieurs Anglais had only thought of men-

tioning that they were the friends of Monsieur le Docteur, or could have procured his attendance, or received a communication from himself to that effect, there could be no doubt that the *Commissaire* would have been at once fully satisfied, and have entirely respected any precautions which they might have considered necessary in reference to their arrival or object in visiting Paris."

It was no use our protesting that we had no need nor wish for any precaution or concealment in the matter. The sergeant only shrugged up his shoulders, and grinning incredulously, actually winked—or came as near that process as the innate self-consequence of a French official might be supposed to allow of. For form's sake merely, he said that he must execute his orders, and search our effects, and secure any papers we might happen to have in our possession; and so leaving his satellite in the outer-room, he just looked into our bags and trunks, to about the same extent as the nominal search of a custom-house official on a continental frontier; then glancing back to make sure that the door was closed, he drew mysteriously towards us, and, in almost a whisper, recommenced an apology for being compelled to conduct us to the prison of Mazas, according to his orders, but where he had no doubt that our detention would be short,

and that while there everything would be arranged for our comfort and accommodation.

"And, Messieurs," he went on to say in the most conciliatory tones, "having yourselves the good fortune to command the friendship and interest of the most influential person in all France, let me venture to hope that when the great change—for which we are all looking—shall have brought itself about, you will not entirely forget the humble services of Sergeant Scarran, who has always tried to carry out his duties with no more than necessary severity, especially when finding himself in charge of gentlemen, whose position and connexions naturally command the respect of all lovers of order and legal authority."

"What the very deuce is the fellow talking about?" I whispered to De Lyons; "and who can he take us for, do you think?"

"Don't show any surprise, but 'be fly,'" was his short reply, as, turning to the *gendarme*, with a twinkle in his eye of half-amusement, half-recognition of some secret understanding between themselves, he assured him, with much dignity, that he might rely upon a full appreciation of his services, when the right time should come, but must remember what dangers there were in any premature allusions to such topics. We

then declared ourselves ready, and having obtained full permission to take our portmanteaus with us, settled our bill with the astonished hotel people; for whose unappeased curiosity I really could not help feeling the greatest sympathy, as we gave them no sort of explanation of the reasons for our thus departing in custody. We were conveyed in a fresh carriage, under our now most amicable escort, to the new prison of Mazas. A great model place it is, close by the Lyons' railway terminus—just beyond the Place de Bastille—built on a patent plan, something on the principle of an overgrown cartwheel.

I supposed, at the time, that they had thought our arrest important enough for the commissary to have sent expressly to announce our arrival; at any rate, they were expecting us, for, as we passed through the wicket of the great gates, I heard the porter say, "*Comment, déjà, mais les autres, où sont-ils?*" At which our *gendarme*, who really seemed to be not a bad sort of fellow at all, seemed most amazingly amused, and went off into loud shouts of hearty laughter.

"*Tout au contraire, mon ami,*" he answered, as soon as he could find words to explain; "these Messieurs will not probably trouble you to entertain them for

more than an hour or two," and then he and two or three of the other officials who were gathered round, whispered, and wagged their heads together, and all seemed equally to enjoy the joke.

CHAPTER XII.

"A prison is a house of care,
A place where none can thrive,
A touchstone true to try a friend,
A grave for one alive.
Sometimes a place of right,
Sometimes a place of wrong,
Sometimes a place of rogues and thieves,
And honest men among."

WALTER SCOTT.

"I ONLY wish I could understand all this, or even part of it," I exclaimed, as soon as De Lyons and I were shut up alone, "for, dash me, if I can make head or tail of the whole matter."

We had, at our own request, been shown with the greatest civility into a small apartment. It could hardly be called a cell, for, though very plain and simple, it was really comfortably furnished, and most scrupulously clean. I happened to notice such little extras as a coloured cloth to the deal table, and cushions to the chairs, which were evidently bran new, for the shop tickets were still upon them, and seemed, as I remember we flattered ourselves, freshly put in for our special accommodation.

"You seem to take it all very naturally," I said to *Taraxacum;* "perhaps you will not mind letting me into the secret."

"I know no more than yourself, my dear friend," was De Lyons' reply, "except from what I could gather, or rather guess at, in that short but very lucky meeting with our old friend, the Professor. But why were you so awfully cold in your manner to the poor old fellow, by the way? He never did you any harm—intentionally, at least."

"I wish he would give me back what he borrowed from me," I said.

De Lyons for a moment put on that provoking look of his—which made me at times almost positively hate him—just as if he was going to pretend not to understand me, but then, seeing, I suppose, that it wouldn't do, said, "Oh, to be sure he will; he has never had an opportunity, you know. I will see that that shall be all right, you may depend upon it; but do not let us go off upon that subject now, for, serious as it may seem to you, and no doubt is, in its proper season, just now the Professor has matters still more serious and important to think about.

"That *gendarme* was not far wrong when he voted him to be, as he did, the greatest man at this moment in Paris, or in France; the highest trump-card, the main-

spring, the moving spirit, I should say, in suitable language, of the whole concern. And now I come to put this and that together, as the saying is, I begin to twig in which direction the little game of the day is going.

"The fact is, I happen to know, no matter how, that the Professor has for many years been the most intimate friend and adviser of the Prince—the ruling man, in short, of this country—names, you know, are dangerous to be repeated, even in stone walls;—he was thrown much with him when they were young men together in Italy, and afterwards in America and London.

"The Professor, indeed, told me as much one day, when he was lecturing me upon the folly of running one's head against one's own destiny—he gave me as an instance how he had foretold the failure, and done all in his power to dissuade from, and prevent, that rash and unlucky expedition to Boulogne. It was also through old Zauber's immediate contrivance, being disguised as a common labouring-man, that the escape from Ham was so cleverly effected; which, however, could never have been managed had it not been for the extraordinary influence which he brought to bear upon the senses and vigilance of the guards and officials about the prison.

"I remember his telling me, when happening to be in

a confidential mood, that it took months before he had recovered the strain and exhaustion upon his own system, both in mind and body, in consequence of his taking solely upon himself to tackle the accumulated vital principle and *odylic* power of so many strong, full-grown men at one time.

"He was with his friend again in '48, when he came over here to be elected to the present position which he now holds; and, depend upon it, there must be some new great change on the cards close at hand; and now, by Hokey! I think of it, what is the day of the month and year, December 1st, 1851, is it not?—of course it is; and only think that it should not have struck me before! Well, as it is necessary for explanation, I do not mind owning, in strict confidence to you, my dear Lambard, that popping suddenly one morning into the Professor's room at Dresden,—the good man was out, but all his papers were left about on the table—from no mean motive of curiosity, but sheer idleness, I took up a paper at which he had been at work, and which was nothing more nor less than a scheme for the *horoscope* of the illustrious Character to whom I have been respectfully alluding.

"The Professor came in before many minutes, and being, or pretending to be, most seriously riled at my meddling with his private papers, violently snatched

the said document out of my hand, before I had made much out of it; but I recollect that my eye did catch a sort of index note in the margin, which specified that the 2nd of December, of—yes, this very year '51, and again next year, were destined to be of the utmost importance, the turning-point, in fact, in the career of that illustrious party; and that, by acting strictly according to certain rules, and if avoiding certain dangers, he might end eventually in re-establishing himself and his dynasty as——Well, never mind. But let us see what a day or two may bring forth.

"I can only say, that nothing in the whole world was at that time more improbable; so much so, that it rather shook my own faith in the Professor's veracity. Indeed, I chaffed him, and told him that I admired his cheek, in trying to come it thus a trifle too strong, and he grew quite savage and begged me to make myself scarce in consequence.

"He himself alluded to my incredulity in that short chat with him I had on the Boulevards; that shows things must be pretty near and sure, or he wouldn't have so far forgotten his habitual caution; and the strange, restless, expectant manner of these officials betray them as primed and on the look-out for some great changes which perhaps may turn up to-morrow, or even to-night."

Taraxacum's interesting discourse was interrupted by the entrance of a most obsequious official—they had not omitted the ceremony of locking the door upon us, by the way, I suppose, from habit and mere form's sake—who, in the blandest tones, requested to know at what hour it would please *les Messieurs* to be served with dinner: he at the same time took occasion to apologize for being prevented, by his duty, from allowing our compatriot and companion in misfortune, as he was pleased delicately to express it, from joining us at that meal. But as he had so far forgotten himself as to become perfectly uncontrollable, and, in his spirit of insubordination, to be guilty of a personal attack and extreme violence against the officer in charge, he had been forced, *malgré lui*, he could assure us, to have him confined in one of the refractory cells, from which, according to the rules of the establishment, no one had power to release him, without a special order of the superior Commissary himself, who had not yet returned from waiting, by express command, upon his excellency the President.

It was Gorles he was talking about; we had actually forgotten all about him. It seemed that he had been brought straight to the prison, while we had been allowed first to go for our things to our hotel.

No sooner had he found himself within the walls than, according to our informant, he had run a regular muck, and exceeded his usual self in the ferocity and frantic spite of his attacks and resistance against all within his reach; kicking, scratching, and otherwise conducting himself in his accustomed wild-beast fashion. He had at last been overpowered by numbers, and having been obliged to be actually handcuffed, had been conveyed ignominiously into the "*cachot*," as I think they call the black hole of their prisons, and there shut up in complete darkness, with no prospect but bread and water by way of refreshment, and the contemplation of his own iniquities for mental occupation and amusement for the next forty-eight hours or upwards, according to his behaviour.

So far from sympathizing, we really could not help laughing heartily, to the evident astonishment of our gaoler; and I am almost ashamed to own, that I think that this additional misfortune of our compatriot certainly had the effect on both De Lyons and myself of considerably raising our spirits, and making us more contented with our own temporary loss of liberty. They served us with a plain but very decent meal, quite enough, and very fairly cooked; and having made no difficulty in acceding to our request, that we

might be allowed to remain together through the night, brought in a second bed, and made everything as comfortable as possible for us. Glad enough we were indeed to turn in—pretty well tired out with all the excitement of the day—some half hour or so before the attendant had looked politely in upon us, to announce that by the regulations of the establishment, the lights must be turned off, precisely at,—whatever the particular hour might be.

CHAPTER XIII.

LE COUP D'ETAT.

It seemed to us about midnight, or not later than two or three in the morning—though, as it proved, it was nearer seven, but still pitch dark—that we were roused from our sleep by a most tremendous row going on in the large central hall, or body of the prison. As we listened, we could make out nothing distinctly but a confused hubbub of swearing, protesting voices, intermingled with the scuffling and stamping of many feet.

"By the living jingo, it's begun then!" cried *Taraxacum*, springing off his bed. "I wonder whether an infuriated populace have broken into the prison, and taken possession of it, as they did the old Bastille? I hope they wont be for voting us to be bloated aristocrats, and want to hang us up to lamp-posts, or stick our heads on to their pikes; for when these 'Mossoos' onee begin their playful larks, there is no reekoning to what lengths their lively spirits may

not carry them. At any rate, there is evidently something serious going on, and we had better scramble into our clothes as quickly as we can in the dark."

That was not a bad suggestion; for in a few minutes our door was unlocked from the outside, and our friendly attendant, or turnkey as I suppose he really ought to be called, put his head in, with a civil apology for disturbing us so early, but a request that we would have the complaisance to get up and turn out of our cell as soon as possible, as the *Monsieur* for whom it had been previously engaged was arrived.

What was to become of us? we inquired. The man seemed puzzled, and saying something about having received no commands, hurried off, leaving our door open for us to walk out when we pleased.

As soon as we had huddled on our things, and had passed out unchallenged by anyone, into the great central hall, from which the whole plan of the building radiates, a most extraordinary scene met our view.

Dimly lighted as it was, by only a couple of gas-jets near the centre, the whole space seemed filled by confused groups of figures in every sort of deshabille and incongruous costume, surrounded and intermingled with *sergents-de-ville*, in full uniform, and armed to the teeth.

There were some in long dressing-gowns, with their

trousers tied in knots round their necks, instead of being worn in the recognised mode, and cotton night-caps on their heads, on the top of which their hats seemed to have been jammed down with violence, hind part before, or otherwise, as chance may have directed; some shuffling along in slippers; some with one boot on a foot, and the other still under their arm; others having apparently had a hard tussle for it when pulled by force out of their beds, as evidenced by the remnants of their night garments hanging in rags and tatters, with cloaks or great coats thrown hastily over them, while their stockings and nether garments, dragging about their heels, could have conduced but slightly to their personal comfort, and certainly nothing to their dignity.

But few of them were in a costume particularly adapted to the temperature of an early raw December morning; were it not that, luckily for them, they, one and all, seemed too hot with boiling rage and indignation to think or care, at the time, for either scantiness of their garments, or the sharpness of the frost.

Such a regular Babel I never listened to in all my days; the whole lot of them, amounting, as that first batch did, I believe, to a score or two, or more, all gesticulating, denouncing, protesting, and haranguing at once. .

One or two of them were handcuffed, but the majority seemed only to be subjected to a very gentle coercion from their conductors, who treated them with a certain degree of respect, but the most imperturbable serenity, as each was, in turn, gradually told off to a different apartment.

De Lyons and I stood there in the obscurity of the background all the while, quite unnoticed, witnessing this extraordinary scene, with no small interest and wonderment, of course not knowing what to make of it, or who, or even of what class of people this large haul of prisoners could consist, until my companion suddenly whispered to me—"Why, by the blessed blazes, this is a rum start, and no mistake. Why that obstreperous old party whom they have just shoved into that cell that we came out of, with the handcuffs on, is General Bedeau; and the next to him, though I forget his name, was also pointed out to me as a leading member of the National Assembly. I saw them both dining together at the *café* the night before last, when you had gone to spend the evening with your Mother; an old friend of mine whom I accidentally met there, and who knows everybody in this city, told me who they were."

When at last they were all disposed of, and each individual, still protesting and making more or less

show of indignation and resistance, had been told off into a separate cell, and the door locked upon him, the *gendarmes*, their conductors, who had evidently utterly forgotten, or had never been aware of our presence, gathered together round the unlighted stove in the middle of the hall, and administering sundry hearty slaps of congratulation on each other's broad backs, and facetious digs in their neighbour's ribs and sides, stood there and grinned and laughed together till their epaulets and accoutrements shook and rattled again like a forest in the wind.

"Bravo! *mes braves!* Hurrah for the winning side!" sung out *Taraxacum* suddenly, at the top of his voice—I really believe as much by way of a vent to his own feelings as a gentle hint of our presence, which had been so entirely overlooked by the officials, thus detected in the indulgence of their most unprofessional hilarity.

The whole group jumped round upon their heels, with every variety of amazement expressed in their gestures and countenances.

"Who are these '*importuns*' here at large?" inquired the head-swell, fiercely, striding towards us.

Our special and obliging turnkey suddenly seemed to remember our existence, and rushed forward with an explanation to his superior officer.

"*Ah! parbleu, messieurs!*" he exclaimed; "a thousand times I entreat your pardons. I have had so much to occupy my thoughts, that I had—pray again forgive me—for the moment entirely forgotten you. But, what have we? Can I credit my senses? Is it then possible?—Yes—no! or is it that Gustave Kanard is so much changed in a few months by the cares and responsibilities of his office that he is not to be recognised by his former *camarade* and fellow-associate in physical sciences—M. De Lyons? or, *for example*, even more marvellous is it indeed that a kind Providence has thus placed it in my power to acknowledge the debt of gratitude which I owe to him who, on a former occasion, by his bravery and courage so chivalrously risked his own life in saving mine, when on the point of being torn to pieces by a furious and bloodthirsty *canaille* in the famous *T'on-and-Gon* revolution, in the capital of the province of Cambridge!"

It was indeed the original "Mossoo" Kanard, our former acquaintance, who perhaps by the interest of the Professor, though I don't know that I ever exactly ascertained that fact, now occupied the responsible situation of head-gaoler of the Mazas (perhaps he himself had some more euphonious title for the dignity, but that is what he really in fact was,

all the same). His arms were round De Lyons' neck, who, luckily for me, happened to be standing nearest, and he had kissed him with a hearty smack upon both cheeks before one could wink. *Taraxacum* was more used to that sort of thing, however, and though I think he was perhaps a little annoyed because I was there as a witness, did not after all seem so very much to mind the absurd salutation. For my part, I took care to grasp both of our enthusiastic friend's outstretched hands so tightly, though cordially, as I shook them with prolonged warmth and violence, at the same time keeping my head thrown well back, that I managed to escape that same demonstration of affection and gratitude.

The whole body of *sergents-de-ville* in the meantime drew up at "attention," in a respectful and admiring circle round us, and honoured their chief and his new-found friends with a general military salute, like a chorus in an opera.

"My very dear and excellent friends," M. Kanard went on, after this first burst of affectionate recognition had thus found vent and a little subsided—"though if I were to consult only my own feelings I would gladly detain you here with me as my guests, if not my prisoners, yet it is my duty and disinterested pleasure to have to announce to you, that you are both

at full liberty to depart hence, as soon as you will. I myself brought back with me the order for the release of two English gentlemen, arrested on suspicion, from the Elysée itself this morning, but having so much of importance upon my mind at the moment, the names, as written in the official document, did not strike my eye or mind as those of any persons with whom I had ever had any previous acquaintance."

I myself did not much wonder at that, as happening to glance at the said order, I perceived that our names were transmogrified into a form which I think would have puzzled ourselves to recognise, let alone any acquaintance, whether French or English. De Lyons was set down as "*Danield Leous,*" and I as "*Monsieur Francland Barddi!*"

"From the Elysée you came then?" said *Taraxacum.* "So that is the winning side, is it? Well, I am glad to hear it; but I suppose it was about an equal toss-up which would cry heads and win, wasn't it?"

M. Commissaire Kanard only grinned very knowingly, and displayed the whole length of his very yellow teeth and gums, begging politely to know when it would suit us to have his gates thrown open for our much-to-be-regretted departure.

"We must have our things out first," answered De

Lyons, "which are locked-up in that cell there, where you have stowed away that old member of Parliament fellow, or whatever you call him in this country; luckily he was one of the handcuffed ones, or I shouldn't wonder if he had prigged some of them by this time."

Taraxacum had many virtues and excellent qualities, but veneration for his betters, or respect for greatness in adversity, were by no means to be reckoned amongst them.

I ventured to suggest that we should scarcely consider it either a compliment or a favour to be turned adrift into the streets at that hour of the morning, for, as I have I think said, we fancied that it was a great deal earlier than it really was, though it was by that time, in fact, past seven, and daylight was breaking. If we could be accommodated anywhere till a more seasonable hour without inconvenience, I said that we should feel grateful.

The *Commissaire* most politely invited us into his own quarters, where we found a good fire, and a cup of most excellent chocolate. Being either too much pre-occupied with the thoughts of his past night's work, or perhaps restrained by the habits and traditions of proper official caution, our entertainer did not seem much inclined to answer the thousand-and-one

questions with which we overwhelmed him; though, by way of explanation, he handed to each of us a copy of a long printed manifesto, which, among other announcements, declared the National Assembly to be dissolved, a state of siege to have commenced, and a very pithy address to the people, all signed by M. de Maupas, le Préfet de Police—which document was, as the *Commissaire* informed us, by that time posted on every wall in Paris.

When we left the prison at our leisure, and drove down the Boulevards with a written pass, which had been made out for us, in case of our being stopped, we found all the principal streets entirely occupied by the military; and, though scarcely a vehicle besides our own *fiacre* was to be seen, the whole populace were at that hour turned out upon the pavement, with the eyes and mouths of amazement stretched to their widest.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN EPISODE OF MODERN FRENCH HISTORY.

Well, I need not pretend to give you a full and particular description of the famous *coup d'état* of '51, in which we thus found ourselves so strangely thrown, for I daresay you know much more now, and even at the very time, knew a great deal better all about it in its details, from the *Times*, and other English papers, than we ever had a chance of doing, though we happened to be on the very spot. When we arrived that morning at the Hôtel Bristol, we found my Mother and relatives sitting quietly at their ten-o'clock breakfast, without having heard a word, or having the slightest idea, of all that occurred during the last few hours, or that a great historical event was actually taking place, as might be said, within the length of their very noses.

"Bless me!" cried my aunt, "do you think, Frank, that all you tell us as having been happening will interfere at all with my going out, and about the streets

and places? there are so many things I particularly want to buy and see, now I am at Paris, it will be really too provoking to be prevented just because there has arisen a crisis or difficulty in these stupid French politics, which of course I, as an English lady and an individual, neither understand, nor take the slightest interest in. Your Uncle," she told me confidentially, drawing me aside out of my poor mother's hearing, "seemed to think that I ought not to go out on business; but it is not for pleasure, you know—which of course makes all the difference—so soon after the funeral and all that; but I had, after a little talking the matter over, convinced him, that being, as we are, perfect strangers here, actually knowing and known by nobody, it was not at all the same as if we were in England, or anywhere where we had been residing for any time, and I had quite brought him to see the thing in my own, that is the right, light; and now, after all, to be told that I must not go out because of this *coup d'état*—whatever that may mean exactly—is too ridiculous. But tell me, candidly, do you think it would be unsafe, or that any one would interfere with, or say or do anything rude to us?"

I did give her my opinion candidly, and succeeded in frightening her into being reasonable, and staying

tolerably patient and quietly at home for that day; but the next morning she strongly importuned her husband to come out with her, or at any rate to allow her to go out, only to convince herself that there really was any danger, and she promised to be contented to stay shut up altogether, if she could see and satisfy herself of any need for doing so.

While my aunt was still arguing the point, all of a sudden we heard the booming of the big guns, which made the windows of the whole hotel shake and clatter again; and the rattling fire of musketry in the streets, with the yells and screams of a mixed populace of men and women who came tearing across the Place Vendôme, tended, as you may think, to convince her a little more forcibly than she had reckoned on; so that, jumping immediately from one extreme to the other, she fled screeching to an innermost apartment, and passed the best part of her next three or four days in the interior of a large linen-press, or even, for some time, I believe, between the mattress and bottom boards of her bed.

Mrs. Harrison, more enterprising, and with a supreme contempt for the French and their vagaries, as she called them, was deaf to all warnings, and would insist upon going out to make a few necessary purchases for her own and her mistress's attire. She

was intensely indignant at finding all the *magazins* in the neighbourhood closed and deserted; and still hoping that further on she might meet with the object of her wishes, was actually in the act of clambering over the remains of a deserted barricade, when she was caught, and carried to a guard-house, and there subjected to a most ignominious personal inquisition; or, as she expressed, entirely turned wrong side outermost, by a parcel of unshaved heathens, to discover whether she had any arms or cartridges concealed beneath the sacred folds of her crinoline, or whatever the equivalent to that superstructure was called in those days.

"As if it was likely," she said, when indignantly recounting her wrongs, "that she was going to trappus about the streets and them Boulevardeses with squibs and crackers sewn up in her petticoats."

Taraxacum, whose natural love of mischief and disorder had full scope during these eventful days, in spite of all advice, threats, or imploring, was out and about all day; quite sure to be wherever the fighting and row was thickest. How he escaped being picked over by one party or the other, while continually potting away as they were, was more than I could ever account for. A dozen or more shot down in the street close by the Porte St. Denis, fell, killed outright or

wounded, within two yards of him, just as he had come up to the spot, as he said, to see the fun; and he, as we may suppose, having seen enough to satisfy him, walked off unscathed, with his hands in his trousers' pockets.

Within a hundred paces further on he was stopped by, and at the very moment engaged in arguing with, an officer on the propriety of his continuing in the streets against orders, when a bullet from a window above, passing over his shoulder, then and there cut the other poor fellow's skull in two, who dropped without uttering another syllable across his feet. That was the very shot which set the Algerian regiments as if mad, and caused the murderous fire to be directed indiscriminately up to the balconies and windows the whole way along the Boulevard.

But De Lyons' great exploit was on the Thursday morning, the 4th of December, I mean. He came rushing into my room, and sat himself down on my bed, before I was up, in convulsions of laughter. He had, it seemed, been knocking about all night, having made great friends, and had a jollification with some of the French officers who were bivouacking with their troops, under arms, in the streets, and about six in the morning had found himself in the not very aristocratic quarter of St. Antoine. There he saw a

man in a forage-cap, with a drawn sword in his hand, riding like an idiot down the middle of the street, upon a great, raw-boned beast of a horse, shouting to the workmen and mechanics, who were just at that time all turning out to their work, "*Aux armes, citoyens! Aux armes! A bas les traîtres perfides! à bas l'usurpateur!*"

"These natives are such rum-uns," said De Lyons, as he graphically described the whole scene, "that it was just a toss-up whether they did not join the fellow who was thus making a ridiculous ass of himself, and take him for a leader, to be mowed down by thousands with the grape and canister which was ready for them. I saw some of their eyes flashing; and some of them, even flinging down their tool-baskets from their shoulders, were already beginning to shout '*Aux armes! Vive Baudin!*' which some one told me was the idiot's name, and that he was an ex-member of the defunct National Assembly. In another minute, the cry of *Vive Baudin!* would have been taken up and become general, and thousands would have joined themselves in ranks behind him. Of course it was no business of mine," continued *Taraxacum*, "but I should not have liked to have seen such folly rewarded even by the triumph of a quarter of an hour's popularity; so, in spite of myself, I could not resist taking

a pot-shot at him with a *hors d'œuvre*, in the shape of a radish as hard as a bullet, which I happened, without any special reason, to have pocketed from my dinner over-night, and which catching his horse on the crupper, set it kicking like fun; and then breaking into a rattling gallop, away it went, tearing down the street, with Mons. Baudin clinging on like grim death, with his arms round its neck, the drawn sword flying one way, the laced forage-cap the other, and as he scattered the crowds of flying *ouvriers*, like a porpoise floundering through the waves of the sea, the cries of '*Vive Baudin!*' were changed to shouts of laughter and yells of derision, which only sent his frightened steed faster and further in its headlong course down the slippery and rough stones of the ill-paved Faubourg."

That skilfully-aimed *hors d'œuvre* may thus, perhaps, have changed whole volumes of French history. It ought to have been preserved and set in the crown of the new Imperial dynasty.

CHAPTER XV.

MORE FAMILY MYSTERIES.

As I see that you really take a certain amount of interest in this narrative of mine, as I thus run on—or being as you are, at any rate, a most patient and first-rate listener—you may perhaps be wondering all this time what had become of poor little Katie. I was, I know. You must not imagine that I had by any means forgotten her; because I have had so much to tell you without having had occasion even to allude to her name. The fact is, I could make nothing of what had become of her all that while. I could obtain no sort of satisfactory answer on the subject either from my uncle or aunt, nor even from my own mother, to any questions I might put to them, direct or indirect. I tried hard one day to pump Harrison; and even offered her a handsome bribe in the shape of a new silk-dress. The offering she accepted, and expressed herself grateful; but when I put it plainly to her, how anxious I was to know truly what had become

of her young lady, she only sniffed hard at me, and solemnly swore that she did not know herself, any more than that Miss De Lorme was safe out of the reach of them, as she, Harrison, "was quite sure would never do no good, either to her or themselves, by running after her."

The Colonel and my aunt talked regularly every morning of leaving Paris, and returning to Italy the next day after to-morrow; but they continued to hang on, deciding every afternoon that it would perhaps be more prudent to remain quietly where they were a little longer, until affairs had somewhat settled down again, and all rumours of more disturbances and dangers, of which there were no end, should have subsided.

De Lyons, as soon as all the fighting and excitement was over in Paris itself, was seized with a sudden recollection of his commercial engagements, and started off for either Antwerp or Amsterdam—I am not sure which, and I don't think he himself had quite made up his mind on the subject when he set out. After he was gone I must confess I began to find myself uncommonly dull, not to say bored, with the humdrum life of our little family circle—being almost obliged, of course, to conform to their hours and habits, which were more suited to their views than mine.

I had no object or amusement, and, bless their dear

hearts! they would take such excessive care of me they would hardly even let me out of their sight. However, as soon as my poor Father's affairs were settled, I knew that I should happily have enough to give me just my independence, if no more, and of that I had made up my mind to avail myself. By the will, the main bulk of his property—which was not so much as I had always fancied it to have been—was left to my mother for her life, except a settlement on myself of 500*l.* a year, until I should arrive at the age of thirty-two, and then, as I on that occasion learnt for the first time, I was to inherit a considerable property in land and funds by my grandfather's will, but only upon some very strange conditions. The most unsatisfactory part of the matter is, that I have never been able to find out precisely what these same conditions are. There is some great mystery about them which I am not allowed to know—to tell the truth, my poor Father, and indeed our family in general, were always rather given to enjoy and cultivate mysteries.

Some time after the occasion I am speaking of, when I came back to England, I thought I would try to get at the bottom of this matter, so I went to the lawyers one day, Wyley, McCraft and Co., you know, and asking to see one of the head rascals, I insisted upon having a look at the will itself, or rather the

probate duplicate, and upon knowing the whole particulars.

McCraft himself at first had the impudence to pretend ignorance about the whole affair—said that he didn't remember, would refer to his partners, and so on. Then as he, I fancy, saw me beginning to get in a rage, and that I was not going to stand his nonsense, he rather changed his tack, and began in another but scarcely less offensive manner, to put me through a whole series of questions and cross-questions, as to how much or how little I on my part knew, or fancied that I ought to know, about my own affairs.

Aggravated as I was just becoming by his impertinence, I feel convinced that I should have very soon proceeded to kick the fellow down the stairs of his own office, had not his partner, Mr. Wyley, happened just then to come in, who soon shut him up, and apologizing to me for such rudeness, pitched into him as he deserved. I heard him in an under voice ask what he could mean by taking so extraordinary a line, and point out the impolicy, to say the least of it, of such behaviour towards the son of an old client of the firm.

But though Mr. Wyley did treat me like a gentleman, he could not, or would not, tell me any more than that the conditions of my grandfather's will,

although no doubt legal, were strange and eccentric; but that after some consideration he thought he might be justified in so far conceding to my wish as to let me know the first, and perhaps most important, condition on which all the others to a certain degree depended, which was no less than a strict injunction that if ever I inquired into, or could be proved to have ascertained, what the main conditions were before the time specified—namely, my attaining the age of thirty-two—I should in that case forfeit all title and claim upon the property, which would then pass on to—to, in fact, the next person named, in the event of my having broken that first unfair condition; and who that next person proved to be, I will tell you in due time. You will own that was a shutter up, and a quiet squencher to all future inquiry, and no mistake. It was, as it happened, only a piece of bare luck that I ascertained that fact, as I thus did, before I had acted upon the advice of a young lawyer friend of mine, little Bobby Sharp, of the Temple, which had been, to have gone straight to Doctors' Commons, and having paid a shilling for reading the old gentleman's will, just satisfied myself. I remembered afterwards that old McCraft had asked me point blank whether I had not been there, and, if so, why not? and even made some sort of offer to

accompany me, or to send some one from his office to show me the way, if I were really so very anxious to ascertain and act upon the conditions of the will; and of course, as I saw afterwards, if I had thus put it into the cunning rascal's power to have proved the fact against me, I may, as it seemed, have found it rather an expensive shilling's worth in reference to my expectations.

I do not remember my Grandfather, and never could from any one make out much about him. Where he had lived, or when he died, I never exactly knew. From what little I could guess, he seems to have been a very queer old file; but whether he was under some cloud himself, or whether there was some hitch in the pedigree, which, as I do not mind in strict confidence hinting to you, is what I have sometimes suspected, there most certainly was a screw loose somewhere.

But in this digression I have been anticipating and getting ahead out of the regular course of my story, and must hark back to the time I was staying on in Paris, after the *coup d'état*, as I have told you, considerably bored, and yet not having the energy to make up my mind for a move. One morning, just before Christmas it was, I remember, I took up *Galignani*, and there, among the list of those who

had lately committed matrimony, my eye caught the announcement in full and proper style of "Melchior Gorles, Esq., son of the late Benjamin Gorles, of Bloomsbury Square, to Caroline Emily, only daughter of the late Major Duffa." And thus it was, you see—though it did not strike me at the time, nor, indeed, until that interview, and limited though very important information which I elicited from the lawyers, which, though I have described to you, did not, you understand, take place until many months later, when I turned up in England—thus it came about, I say, that the wretch Gorles again, of all people in the world, by marrying my nearest relation, as she certainly was—though unacknowledged, if not downright ignored, by my mother—became my next heir-at-law, having his own uncle, who had, of course, concocted the marriage, in the position of family solicitor to myself, as well as acting executor to my grandfather's strange will, with a direct interest in watching and trying to catch me tripping in the fulfilment of, for all I know, some impossible conditions, with which I am not even allowed to become acquainted.

How Gorles had managed to get out of the scrape we left him in that morning in the prison of the Mazas I never exactly knew; but he must have gone

straight over to London to carry out his precious uncle's scheme. *Taraxacum* had, as I think I have already told you, hit the right nail on the head; but I had so much to think of that I had forgotten it, and was for the moment taken by surprise. I made no remark on the subject, however, to my relatives; but in the course of that evening I heard my aunt chattering about it, with many comments and wonderments.

"Do you want the *Galignani* any more?" I heard her inquire of the Colonel; "for if not I should so like to send it on by post to Katie, with a cross marked against that Gorles' marriage; I am sure it will amuse and interest her, as she always likes to see when any of her old friends, or people she has known about, go and get born, or are dead or married."

All right, thought I to myself, I will watch for that interesting newspaper when it goes downstairs to the post-box, and find out Katie's whereabouts by that direction. I had, I must tell you, by my private observations, already made pretty sure that the young lady was not still staying on all that time at Genoa; something my aunt had let slip one day when she did not perceive, or had forgotten my presence, and then the bungling way in which she tried to con-

tradict herself, confirmed me as to the correctness of at least so much of the information, at which I had been in vain trying to arrive.

I had more than once offered to post my aunt's letters for her, but without any further reward for my politeness than her thanks, and sometimes having had the privilege of prepaying them out of my own pocket, not having thought it worth while to remind the old lady, when oblivious, as she sometimes was, of such a trifle.

It seems now really almost too stupid to confess that at the time it never once struck me that the thick and constant double letters which I thus posted addressed to—

"La Signorina Araminta Blobb,
"La Casa Volpiani,
"131, Lung'arno, Pisa,"

might possibly contain enclosures to Katie, to whom I knew my aunt was quite as much attached as to her own child, and therefore had wondered all the more at her having, as far as I could ascertain, entirely suspended all correspondence with her. It was only when, having caught a glimpse of that interesting *Galignani*, directed to the same Signorina Blobb, that the very palpable fact dawned upon me that *mi bella* Katie might have been left in the care

of a governess or some respectable spinster of that rather unromantic name. And so for once in a way I felt that Gorles, having become my kinsman, had indirectly done me what I considered a good turn. But we shall see.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TOWER OF ST. JAQUES.

I OFTEN have wished that I was the "Hero" of a three-volume novel, in one particular at least, which always seems to me the peculiar characteristic of that enviable lot—I mean the entire independence of money, with all its vulgar, matter-of-fact appliances.

Cash, or rather the absence of it, which in real life is the paradoxical way in which it interferes and embarrasses all human affairs, never seems to enter the calculations of those thrice happy "heroes and heroines" of the light literature of the day, except, of course, in those cases where destitution and the pangs of starvation may be necessary for the actual sensational crisis in the story; but with respect to any such trifles as travelling expenses, for instance, though we all know that railway-tickets and cab-hire are, by a stern and immutable law of nature, affairs of ready money only, they always manage to start off at any moment to any distance whenever it suits them; and

I have never yet read of any "hero" whose plans were interfered with, either by not having the wherewith to pay his washing-bill, or who was ever bothered by having to pack his portmanteau, or being obliged to pay for extra luggage when it was packed.

This now specially occurs to me, because, from the interest you have shown, and the care you have taken in jotting down and trying to arrange in some order these simple adventures of mine, I sometimes have suspected you of the intention of reproducing some of these notes among the sketches from real life to which I know you are addicted. But should such be the case, remember that I cannot possibly do for your "hero," even if I had any ambition for so great an honour, never having enjoyed the privilege of such financial immunities as I have mentioned. You certainly could never bring yourself to committing to print so despicable a reason as that which happened unfortunately to be the true one which prevented me at that time from starting immediately from Paris for Italy in hopes of finding out Katie now that I had discovered her address: for that real and true reason was no other than the contemptible one of Impecuniosity; that is the right polysyllable, is it not, to express why I could not at once pack up and start off? or as you would have to call it, I suppose, "fly on the

wings of love for the shores of the sunny south, eager to bask in the yet more brilliant sunshine of the smiles of my inamorata." Bah! what am I saying! What a heartless beast I am to couple even a passing thought of that poor girl with such light nonsense. I am ashamed of myself, as I ought to be, for such thoughtlessness.

As soon as I should be able to do so, I certainly made up my mind to start for Pisa; but that could not be anyhow until I should have received the first remittance of my newly-settled allowance, for which I should still have to wait for the next two or three weeks, until the turn of the new year, in fact. Then, too, I clearly foresaw difficulties in getting away without full explanation, and remonstrance from my respected relatives, who would insist upon taking so much care of me. Should they divine my special object and destination, I felt sure they would do their very best to put a spoke in my wheel. I had therefore to lull all suspicion as to the important but very simple discovery which I had made, while quietly arranging my preparations for giving them the slip some fine morning before they should have thought it worth while to take any extra precautions against my gaining another interview with Katie. Besides the immediate lack of funds, however,

I at times felt conscious of a want of energy and nervous distrust of my own powers, which seemed growing over me, a feeling entirely strange to my natural disposition. I had by the time I am speaking of pretty well recovered my health and muscular strength. I had now again a good appetite enough to face my dinner like a man, and I slept all night like a top, for I took plenty of strong exercise in one way or the other; but yet I was not my real old self, and the confidence that I used to have in my own weight and physical powers was gone, and no longer the same, and in consequence a morbid sense of despondency was preying on my spirits.

I was returning one evening from a constitutional walk, which had taken me out beyond the Porte St. Denis—when on my way home, I happened to find myself opposite a particular print-shop on he Boulevards, exactly on the very spot where we had pulled up so suddenly in the mourning coach the day that De Lyons sprang out to greet the Professor; then I suddenly bethought me of that mysterious character. He is the man to help me, of course, I said to myself, as the remembrance of that strange encounter and its consequences flashed through my mind. *Taraxacum* said he was an honest fellow, and only waiting for an opportunity to return it.

"Of course he will!" I exclaimed, and unconsciously spoke it out so loudly, though only giving vent to my own busy thoughts, that a polite old gentleman who happened to be passing thought I had addressed him, and stopping as he took off his hat to me, expressed the most profound regret that he "*n'entended pas Anglais,*" and was therefore not able to give me the information which he thought I had asked of him.

"I must lose no time in finding him," I continued, in a more confidential tone to myself, at the same time returning the old gentleman's salute with an extra polite bow, but no attempt at any explanation. "Of course I must find him at once, and demand the restitution from him at any rate. Great man as he is supposed to be now in this capital, there can be no difficulty in finding out his address, which any one will be sure to be able to give me."

There I found, however, that I was quite out of my reckoning. Nobody that I applied to seemed to know, or even to have heard of, such a person. For more than a week I was making inquiries in every direction I could think of. I wished I had thought of asking De Lyons before he had left, for I knew that he had been constantly with the Professor. I tried at the Post-office. They had never heard the name, and knew nothing about him. The police, to whom

I next went, snubbed me; I could not help fancying that they there knew more than they chose to tell. I went all the way up to the Mazas, and inquired for the Governor there; he was away somewhere for a time. Then I tried to find Sergeant Scarran, who had informed us of the Professor's interest in the late movements; the poor fellow had been shot dead from one of the barricades on the day of the street fighting. Our friend the turnkey was affable and accommodating as ever, but he could give me no information; he had never even heard the proper name of Monsieur le Docteur, as he called him. He only knew that we had been specially recommended to his care by Sergeant Scarran, as being placed in confinement as a mere matter of form, and to keep us out of danger during the few hours of the crisis, but as really being the intimate friends of some personage very high in authority, whom he did not mind now saying he had supposed to be no less than *son Altesse le Président* himself; and he would only venture to hope that we were satisfied, and would bear testimony to his assiduity in fully carrying out his instructions.

I was beginning to think that I must give up the idea in despair, and was sauntering home one evening, listlessly and disappointed, when at the corner of one of those streets just outside the Palais Royal, I ran

against a man who had stopped to speak to some friend under the lamp, whom in the full glare of the gaslight I recognised in an instant; it was He himself whom I had met that eventful night at Dresden in the Professor's rooms, and again on the Ponte Vecchio at Florence. He returned my hard stare with interest, but without the slightest token of recognition, either in his eye or by any gesture, and then, as he turned from me with a careless, supercilious sort of swing to his fashionably-dressed companion, he spoke distinctly in the identical voice and peculiar drawl which had been so deeply impressed upon my memory: so distinctly indeed that I felt convinced that I was fully meant to overhear, as I could not help doing, what he said—

"Rely upon it, *mon cher*, if you find yourself to-morrow morning, at noon, under the shadow of the old tower of St. Jaques, you will be sure to meet the Doctor there."

And with that intimation he took leave of his friend, and passed hastily down the dark side of the street.

I was chiefly occupied that evening in studying a large map of Paris in which the Colonel had invested, in search of the tower, or church, as I

supposed it to be, of St. Jaques. Until that day I had never even heard of it, and having, of course, by the great *law of contraries*, carefully examined every square inch, above, below, and on each side of the precise locality, before I chanced to spot the right one, was quite surprised to find it at last within two hundred yards or so of the Louvre; whereas I had fancied, I do not know why, that it must be right away among the purlieus of what De Lyons used to call the Surrey side of the river. The tower stands alone; the body of the church to which it belonged was, I think I have heard, demolished at the time of the Revolution, and now that it has been beautifully restored, forms one of the chief features of the newly-built Rue de Rivoli; but in those days it was in the centre of a labyrinth of filthy little back streets and alleys inhabited by the very lowest class of population.

All through that night did the Tower of St. Jaques haunt and trouble me in my dreams. I first thought that the Professor and his mysterious familiar were with me on the leads of the said eminence, which appeared to be some most extravagant height, and that each taking me gently by an arm, they, in the most courteous tones, insisted upon my jumping over with them, assuring me that there was no danger, for

that I should find myself able to fly, if I would only make the first effort, and have full confidence in my own powers. Then, again, I was below, and the tower was leaning over, about to fall on me as I stood waiting under the shadow of it. The Professor was holding it up by keeping his back firm against one of the buttresses, while he begged and entreated me to take care of myself and get out of the way. But my feet seemed rooted to the spot so that I could not move.

Confound the Tower of St. Jaques! was my first awakening sentiment in the morning; but I determined nevertheless to find myself at the appointed spot beneath its shadow punctually at the time I had overheard mentioned.

CHAPTER XVII.

RESTORATION.

ALTHOUGH I had very carefully spotted it on the map over-night, I had some little bother in finding the Tower of St. Jacques exactly, having rather overshot my mark, and so losing my way in a narrow ill-paved street, down the middle of which the open kennel of nearly stagnant water carried its filthy freight of dead rats, rotten cabbages, and every other sort of abomination—an interesting relic of the good old days, which would have afforded unbounded gratification to a Tory vestryman, or a genuine old Legitimist—*La rue des Lavandières*, was, if I remember right, the title of that most unsavoury locality, leading into an even worse street than itself, dedicated, by name at least, specially to the butchers.

It was just booming twelve, however, on some neighbouring chimes, when, at the opening of a cross alley, I found myself close under the old black walls of the Gothic tower; as it happened, exactly on the con-

trary side to which I had been peering up all the courts and passages in expectation of finding it.

There was the tower, but where was the Professor? I felt so perfectly confident of seeing him, that I was quite prepared to resent it as an injury and breach of common courtesy, that he was not there, coming at once across to greet me.

There were some dozen or so of the aborigines of that neighbourhood hanging about the door-posts, or lounging out of the broken windows above, all in a more or less state of ragged deshabille, watching with seeming interest, though anything but good favour on their scowling countenances, the movements of a stout, puffy-looking individual, who evidently, by his appearance and dress, was quite as great a stranger in that quarter as myself.

Having a long measuring-tape, or chain dragging after him, this person was, without appearing to notice, or even to be aware of the attention which he was exciting, very busily occupied in taking the width, length, breadth, &c., of the street, calculating, shaking his head, and then from time to time writing down the results of his calculations in a large note-book.

Thus making my observations, I had drawn close up to him, while his back was still turned towards me, when from exactly the opposite side another well-

dressed man came across, and at once addressing himself to the puffy individual, I overheard him say—

"Ah, Doctor, I was told I should be sure to find you here at this hour; and now tell me, what is the result of your investigations? can it, think you, be managed that the fine old tower, after all, can be spared, without interfering with the proposed improvements?"

I could have flung my hat at his head in sheer disgust, when in this new comer I recognised the smartly dressed man whom I had noticed the night before, when—you know who I mean—well, the Devil then, stopped to speak to him at the street corner; and while telling him where to find his friend, in an apparently ordinary manner, had, at the same time, so cunningly and correctly, as the event after all proved, conveyed to me the information for which I was at that time so anxious.

The ways and means of that Party are indeed inscrutable and beyond all calculation. There is no mistake about that, you may depend upon it.

I was utterly disgusted at being thus sold by such a very common-place *dénouement* to my expectations, and was turning away with a biggish word or two as a safety-vent to my injured feelings, which seemed to

rather increase the astonishment of the other two actors on the scene, whose looks had already expressed some wonder at my presence in so uninviting a neighbourhood, coming up close upon them as I had before I could recover myself, and then bouncing off with a sudden expletive like a cork out of a bottle; when, behold, as I turned myself round, there straight opposite to me across the narrow street stood the Professor himself, in the doorway of one of the very dingiest of all the very dingy houses.

I had only just before been sold, and almost surprised at not finding him, as I had quite made up my mind that I should do, waiting for me, and now when I did see him, it so startled me, that my heart nearly jumped out of its proper place with the shock.

He did not at first perceive me, but was occupied in arranging the heavy folds of his cloak, preparatory to stepping down into the sloshy street from a rather steep door-step, upon which eminence he was still poised, when I accosted him.

Without exhibiting, however, a bit more surprise, than if it had been the most natural thing in the world, that I should be where I was, and we were constantly meeting.—"*Ah, mon cher!*" he said, "I have been wishing much to see you; but have been

so entirely occupied that every day something has happened to prevent me.——

"But who then told you where I lived?" he continued. "Ah, our volatile friend, of course; he is departed: and so you have found your way down here by yourself to see your old friend."

"You don't mean that you really live down in this filthy place," I was just going to say, but changed it to "retired spot—do you?"

The Professor seemed amused, and only nodded the head of assent.

He seemed to consider for an instant, and then fumbling in his pockets, from which he produced a key, invited me to come up. Perhaps he saw something of hesitation in my manner, for taking me again by the hand which he had just dropped, and looking me straight in the face, he said, earnestly, "*Est que c'est donc que vous vous méfiez de moi?*"

"Lead the way," I said, by way of reply, as a distinct tingling sensation ran through the hand which he held, and right up my arm, with such force as nearly to make me sing out; and without another word he turned in at the door again, and still keeping my hand in his, began the ascent of the dark winding staircase within. Dark, rotten, and filthy as those

stairs were by which we scrambled up to what must have been at least the fifth or sixth floor, I was, I suppose, all the more struck by the contrast when I found myself ushered into a large well-lighted apartment, plainly but very prettily furnished, and so scrupulously clean that the parquet floor and the old-fashioned marqueterie table which stood upon it shone almost like mirrors, with bright polish. On another table, which stood in the deep window, was spread out a large parchment, scrawled all over with signs and queer angles and triangles, like so many overgrown propositions of Euclid.

The Professor in one instant saw my eye rest upon the work, from which he had evidently only just risen to go out, and which at once brought to my mind *Taraxacum* and the indiscreet observations to which he had pleaded guilty. Perhaps the same thought occurred to the Professor, for with an assumed air of carelessness he threw over them a large portfolio, which he picked up out of an old-fashioned leather arm-chair, and motioning me to occupy the same, while he pitched an extra log of wood upon the fire, he sat himself down on the other side of the hearth opposite to me, and with his eyes gleaming like lightning through his spectacles, expressed himself as extremely gratified thus to see me as his guest.

"You have been, I assure you, Mons. Lambard, for some days greatly occupying my thoughts. I have felt that by the working of mutual attractions we were destined to meet each other very shortly. You have on your part also been seeking me, for a special purpose of which I am aware." I had, by the way, never told him that I had been seeking him, though it was, as you know, certainly the fact.

"Our mutual friend, De Lyons," I said, "probably informed you of the special purpose which made me desirous of intruding upon your valuable time."

"Perhaps so," he replied, with a nod; "though I should have known all about it equally well had I never seen De Lyons."

"Who could have told you besides?" I asked.

"You have not yet informed me," replied the Professor, "by whom you were directed to come into this quarter to find me."

"The Devil himself, Mons. Professor," I answered; and I felt that I spoke advisedly.

He stared and grinned at me benignly.

"Well, let us at least give him his due then, and own that he tells the truth sometimes," he said.

"Well, you give me what I have come for," I made up my mind to say, after a pause of some minutes. "You are not going to pretend that you

do not understand me," I added, rather sharply, as I saw the expression of his eyebrows elevating themselves. I have been so anxious to see you, that I might ask you honestly to restore that which you fairly borrowed of me, but have never returned."

"Certainly," he replied; "and I assure you that I only regret that I have not long since had an opportunity of doing so. You will find it unimpaired, and even to a certain degree improved and increased from having been associated during these months with a well-controlled temper and a healthy constitution; but do you think that, since your serious illness, and all that you have been through (I had never mentioned my illness to him), you are yet strong and well enough to stand the reaction of the complete restitution all at once, or had it not better, perhaps, be done gradually?"

The thought suddenly occurred to me, that should it be necessary for me to be put in the same state, and again to go through all, with, may be, the same consequences that I had gone through when the powers of which I was now seeking the restitution, were originally borrowed from me—that here I was all alone, without any of my belongings having even an idea of what had become of me, completely in the

hands and at the mercy of this mysterious man, who, for all I knew, might think fit to keep me here for months, or even altogether, for some of his strange experiments, or unhallowed doings. He touched me with one finger, and evidently read my thoughts as plainly as if I had given utterance to them in so many words. Shaking his head with a grave smile, he said—

"You doubt my honour, then, and do not even reflect upon the immense debt of gratitude which I owe to you, and for which I shall ever feel bound to you for the great invaluable service that your generous trust, so confidingly accorded, has been to me. But let us wait for another opportunity, when you shall, if you please, have some third party present at our interview; but remember, that to be certain of all going well, you must not bring as your friend any one who is disposed to disbelieve what he has never seen or inquired into, or who may mar the whole process by the baneful and adulterated presence of a spirit of scepticism."

There was something very clear and truthful in those strange, gleaming eyes of his, which gave me full confidence in him, as he thus kindly responded to my thoughts.

"Must I be put to sleep for any length of time?" I inquired.

"Not necessarily, if you think you can bear it, as I have said, all at once." As he spoke he felt my pulse, at the same time placing his other hand upon my heart. I was conscious of its beating vehemently, but he seemed satisfied.

"Do you desire it now particularly?" he asked, fixing his eyes straight into mine.

"I do."

"Have you any mistrust or doubt in my powers or goodwill to act faithfully according to such desires?"

"None," I replied, firmly.

"Do not flinch then—be prepared."

He was standing in front of me, grasping each of my hands firmly in his own, and as he gave that word of warning, he leant forward and breathed suddenly upon me.

The effect was exactly what I should imagine to be the momentary sensation during annihilation by a stroke of lightning. I received a shock which positively made me reel again, and I felt the blood rush round and round through every vein of my body like scalding quicksilver, while my head seemed to whirl round as if I had drunk off a tumblerfull of blazing brandy.

When after a few minutes I began to recover my-

self a little, I saw the Professor himself fallen back into his large chair almost in a fainting state; the large drops of perspiration were pouring down in thick masses from his brow, and his whole frame was trembling and shaking like that of any very old man; giving myself a good shake, so as to bring my own senses back into order, I rushed across the room for a caraffe of cold-water which I perceived upon a shelf in the corner, and as I held a glass to his quivering lips, he looked up smilingly into my face, and grasped my offered hand with the greatest apparent warmth of affection and gratitude. As I thus stood over him, I was again conscious of a warm stream of some subtle fluid, or spirit gently flowing back from myself to him, through the medium of our grasped palms, which seemed to have the effect of gradually reviving him.

Presently he directed me to a particular drawer in an old-fashioned escritoire which stood on the other side of the room, from which I brought him a small phial containing a thick, dark purple liquid; of this he poured some eight or ten drops into the water, and drinking it off with a single gulp, expressed himself, though still in a low feeble voice, to be sure to be soon all right again.

As I stood by his chair watching him with some

anxiety, I became sensible of quite a strong interest coming over me for the strange man, as he lay back there with his eyes half closed, and gasping for breath. I even began to regret the benefit to myself, at the expense of such suffering in the poor old fellow; and when he seemed to be becoming somewhat more tranquil and composed, I offered him some attempt of an apology to that effect. Although entirely deprecating anything of the sort, I think he was gratified at my expressions of condolence and self-reproach.

"It was my own fault," he replied—"my own fault and imprudence entirely; in thinking so much about your physical powers and capability of bearing the sudden exchange, I quite overlooked my own. As I have said before, however, I owe you much. Yes! very much more than you are aware of, or can ever imagine; and I am pleased and glad to have had this opportunity of thus making a full restitution of all, and perhaps even more than all, that I originally received from you; do not however distress yourself any more about me, for I shall quite recover myself in a few hours; but tell me, by the way, how has it affected yourself!"

I had been so taken up with my attentions and real anxiety for the Professor, that I had not found time

to think even of myself, but thus reminded, as I drew my figure up to my full height and stretched out my limbs, it was with an inward thrill of joy and pride that I felt that I really was once more my old self again entirely: yes, by Jove, sir, it was me myself there again all over, every inch of me.

"Bravo!" said the Professor, smiling kindly at me, as he read my unspoken thoughts. "Now I must ask you to leave me——No, nothing, I assure you, with a thousand times repeated thanks; there is nothing more that I require, except perfect quiet and repose for a few hours to recover myself."

I begged him to let me come to see him again, and soon, for that I should be anxious to know how he was going on. I had, as I say, really grown quite fond of him. He smiled at my eagerness, and told me that he might be staying on in Paris for some time longer, or might be obliged to leave the next day, at any minute's notice; that being mainly dependent upon the will of——others. I guessed whom he alluded to. "But whether we meet again shortly," he continued, "or, perhaps, not for years, let us ever cherish the bond of mutual interest and sympathy which has existed between us; and, depend upon it, if ever hereafter you should really need a friend in any special trouble or adversity, that I may be

found nearer to you and appear more opportunely than you may perhaps expect. One piece of warning, I will more particularly give you, though you may not, I know, be able to carry it out entirely; yet there is one person in this world whom, amongst all others, you will find it to your advantage to avoid, shun, and, above all things, never bring yourself willingly in collision against; that person's destiny is, accidentally, but most strangely and undoubtedly, mixed up with your own. His name is——"

"Melchior Gorles!" I exclaimed, taking the name out of his very mouth; "you need not tell me."

He nodded gravely, and the door was closed between us.

I came skittering down that ricketty old staircase four steps at a time, with very different feelings, and in a very different style of stride, from that in which I had so lately mounted them.

As I made my way along through the crowded streets, I am almost afraid that there must have been an extra spice of devil-me-care-dom, and a swagger about my appearance loud enough to make several of the natives turn round and stare after me, with anything but either favour or respect expressed in some of their ugly mugs. Of course I feel ashamed of such a notion now, as I ought to do, but at the time I did

not trouble myself, or care one pin, for what they thought of me.

I had only one care—one thought—to occupy my mind, and that was, that I was all right, and once more my real self again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DOMESTIC TYRANNY.

"That part of tyranny, that I do bear,
I can shake off at pleasure."

Julius Cæsar, act i. sc. 3.

It was, I think, the very next evening that I overheard my Aunt noticing the great change which had come over me, both as to manner and appearance, to my poor Mother, imputing it entirely to the efficacious quality of some wonderful pills which she had been so good as to prescribe, and to pester me nearly out of my life about taking regularly, for the last fortnight.

"Frank has done wisely," I heard her say, "in having taken my advice for once, and my pills twice a day, at eleven and three, precisely, three to the dose. Any one can see how much benefit he has derived already."

It must have been the advice alone, however, which deserved all the credit; for the pills, I must confess, might have been found in undiminished numbers on my dressing-table, in their original box, which was nearly the size of an average fig-drum. Deuce a one

of them had ever found its way down my throat, although my aunt was always going on about them.

At such opportune moments as the middle of breakfast she would do her best to spoil my appetite, and my temper at the same time, with such oracular reminders as—"Frank, my dear boy, you will not forget eleven o'clock this morning;" or, if she heard me making any engagement it would be, "You must be at home at three, you know; as Dr. Anser says that the great essential, in you know what, is keeping the strictest punctuality of hours;—three at eleven, and again at three, you know." And so she would go on day after day aggravating me on the subject exceedingly; the fact is that Mrs. De Lorme, though a worthy good sort of lady in her way, had gradually been assuming a species of domestic tyranny over me, which at first, almost imperceptible, had, little by little, brought matters to a climax which was becoming a good deal too much to put up with. As women always will do if you let them, because I did not stick up to her at once, she began to fancy that I was completely under her thumb, and increased her encroachments accordingly; not only by bothering me continually about my health, with her recommendations of pills, tonics, and other doctor's stuffs, and interfering with the enjoyment of my very meals with

her tiresome lectures on wholesomes and unwholesomes, but even venturing to catechize me as to my goings out and comings in—Where had I been? what had I been doing? who had I been with? and such like impertinences. Things were coming to that pass that I was expected to be at her beck and call, to take her about with me, and run her messages, which, as long as such offices were regarded as a favour, though sometimes a bore, I had no objection to fulfilling occasionally; but now that they had become almost to be looked upon as a right and a duty, my proud spirit revolted from such oppression.

Even the Colonel, too, had more than once taken to grumbling audibly, if I were not down of a morning, or came in late for dinner, though I never asked them to wait for me.

In short it was high time for me to be off, and the welcome day having arrived on which my first remittance was paid into my bankers, I determined to announce my intention of what the Yankees call "*making tracks.*"

"Well, Frank, so it is all decided, and we are all to start the day after to-morrow for London, together. We four shall just fill a railway compartment, if we can make proper interest with the *conducteur*, and get

him not to put any other disagreeable people in with us."

Such was the opening greeting I received from my aunt the very morning that I had, before hopping out of bed, made up my mind to break the stern fact of my departure; not, I own, without a chilly qualm, something very like "funk," in doing so.

I cannot say what my countenance may have expressed, but I had no chance of getting in any verbal reply, as my aunt went rattling on with her usual rapidity—

"You see the Colonel has received a letter this morning, which makes it necessary for him to go over to London for a week or so, and I shall be too delighted to take the opportunity of accompanying him, as it will be quite a treat to see the old place again after so long an absence—so, as we know that your mother has been for some time anxious to get back home, we have settled that we shall all go together, and you, you know, will have to take special care of me; as I shall feel quite lost, and a stranger in the land, if it were not for having you to "beau" me about to all the sight-seeing, and shopping, and visiting which I shall have to do—which will be so nice, you know—and a fine use I shall have to make of you, I can promise you."

"The only drawback to that part of the scheme," I replied, when she at last stopped from sheer want of breath, "will be, I am afraid, that I shall not be there to accompany you; as I have made up my plans and arragements for a tour in exactly a contrary direction, and intend to pass the rest of this winter in the south."

I really thought for a moment that my Aunt would have flown at me, so angry did she seem, and even astonished at my daring thus coolly to kick my foot through the cobweb which, I imagine, she had flattered herself that she had so artfully and successfully wound round me and the freedom of my actions.

"But you must come with us!" she gasped.

"I don't see any must about it, my dear aunt—especially as it doesn't happen to suit my book just now."

"Book!—what book? You are not going to publish anything, are you?"

That made me laugh; at which she waxed more indignant.

"But you cannot think of going by yourself!" she exclaimed.

"Why not?—do you think anybody will run away with me? Surely I am big enough and ugly enough to take care of myself, aint I, anyhow."

"I did not suppose anybody would elope with you for your beauty," replied my aunt, who always would take my conventional modes of expression in their most literal meaning.

"There is your mother to be considered!" growled the Colonel.

My mother was not present at this agreeable breakfast discussion; she generally had that meal sent up to her in her own room, and did not make her appearance until later.

"That is just the point that this new arrangement of yours has settled for me," I answered; "for now of course you can take charge of her, and see her settled down at Danesbury, where I do not suppose that either she or you expect, that under any circumstances, I am to remain tied to her apron-strings for the rest of my life; therefore, as so good a chance offers, I may as well start now from Paris, as come back through it a month hence—thus saving time and distance, to say nothing of expense."

"But where do you mean to go to?" sung out the two, both at once, in a duet.

"Oh, I scarcely know; perhaps to Geneva, and through Switzerland, and across the Alps, downwards to the south. This is, in my opinion, the right time to enjoy that style of scenery in its real grandeur—

there will be some excitement in working over the passes of the mountains through deep snows and hard frosts, rushing down the other side, as I have heard they do on sledges; then to Milan, Turin, and Genoa." I noticed a rapid glance pass between my uncle and aunt, as I mentioned the last city with purposely strong emphasis; and I laughed in my sleeve, as I knew that I was selling them, all the while that they were thinking that I should be myself sold. "The short lamp-light glimpse that I had of that latter city," I continued, in as nonchalant a tone as I could assume, "has given me the strongest desire to see more of it. I have been reading it all up in Murray; and the Vandyke portraits in some of those magnificent old family palaces must be alone worth a journey to the world's end. By the way, as you will not be going back so soon as you expected, can I take any message, or do anything for you in Genoa?"

"Thank you," replied my aunt, very drily, "we have no one there belonging to us to whom we could have any message to send. We have written some days since to break up our little establishment, and have given up the apartments we had there, so that we cannot offer you any accommodation, and at this time of year you will probably find all the hotels quite full."

"Oh, don't mention it, pray!" I said, pretending not the least to take in her meaning; "I daresay I shall have as good a chance as anyone else of finding some sort of room or other, good enough for me."

As they had chosen to avoid all mention even of Katie to me, though I had at first more than once naturally inquired after her, I now followed the same cue, leaving them to suppose, if they liked to do so, that I had given up all idea and interest even in her existence.

As soon as my back was turned, I knew they would be at my Mother urging her on to oppose my newly-formed plan, so I just forestalled them in that direction, by going up to see her, contrary to my usual wont, before she came down from her own room, and having it out with her privately. I told her plainly that it was high time for me to be off, as matters were really reaching that pitch, that nothing short of a regular row would, I was afraid, be the consequences, if I were to stay on. I had before this been grumbling and complaining to her of the audacious encroachments of my tyrannical would-be controllers. And indeed she herself had had the good sense to see, and quietly disapprove of, the same, though using all her best efforts to persuade me to submit to them for the short time that we should probably have to be together;

and for her sake to avoid a family quarrel, and a regular split, which it might lead to, with her only sister.

"But if you must go, Frank, what is your special attraction to Genoa?" asked my mother, looking me very straight in the face. "If you suppose that the colonel's daughter, Catherine De Lorme, is there, I can only tell you, that you are entirely mistaken."

"My aunt implied as much. But do you then know, mother, where she is, and what they have done with her?"

A most plaintive expresssion of melancholy, and a slow shake of the head, was the only reply which I received.

"Very well then, as she is not there, I do not quite see what right my respected uncle and aunt can pretend to, in cutting up so rough as they seem to do, at my wishing to go to Genoa; it does not belong exclusively to them that I am aware of; and as for Katie, I must only hope patiently that she will turn up some day, somewhere, when she is of age as well as myself, and then we shall both be free to please ourselves in the most important matter of our lives, and best chance of future happiness. The De Lormes always seem to me utterly to have forgotten, that had it not been for me, they would not have had any daughter at all, to be the

subject of all these mysteries and manœuvres. She belongs to me, I say, by right, body and soul; she ought to be mine only, for was she not dead and lost for ever to them, when I recovered her?"

My mother uttered a scream, and jumping up from her sofa, stopped my mouth literally by covering it tightly with her hands.

"Oh, my poor boy! my poor boy!" she cried out, as if in real and intense agony; "every morning and night on my knees do I pray that you and poor Katie may never again meet; that for both your sakes your destinies may always keep you apart! You must, indeed, forget her, and drive away all such fatal hopes—all thoughts of her from your mind. If you ever by chance find yourself in the same city—in the same country, even—for your own happiness, as well as hers, fly,—never rest until there are hundreds of miles between you."

"Why?" I asked, after a pause, for I was half frightened by the poor *mater's* vehemence; "can you not, for mercy's sake, tell me the simple reason, why? If there really is some such good, some dreadful reason to be revealed, let the Colonel break it to me, if you cannot; then, perhaps, my own sense of right may help me to see in the same light as you do the propriety, the dreadful necessity, or whatever it may be,

of schooling my mind to what is inevitable; anything, I am sure, however hard to bear, must be better than this mystery and horrible suspense."

"You cannot—you must not—at least for years to come—know the reason; which, however, believe me, is, as you say, inevitable. Have you no faith, no trust in your own mother's love, and in those who are only acting for the good of yourself and that poor girl, whom I would to Heaven you had never seen?"

"There does not seem to be much faith or trust in me," I said, rather bitterly; "but, however, as she is certainly not now in Genoa, I suppose there can be no harm in my going there—and as nobody will tell me where she is gone, it is their fault, not mine, if the hundred miles you recommend does not always intervene between us."

It was on the whole rather lucky that our conversation took the drift it did; for according to the usual rule of capacity of the feminine mind, which cannot generally entertain more than one distinct idea at a time, it entirely distracted my dear mother's attention from what might be called, in strict parliamentary terms, the "previous question"—that is to say, the original fact of my proposing to set off on "my own hook." I had rather looked forward to no end of objections and difficulties, before I should persuade "the

parent" to see the advantages of my intended start in the same way as I did myself—indeed, I fully expected that she would still have nourished some of her absurd suspicions, and fancied that I was only eager to throw myself once more into the entanglements of her original "*bête noire*"—the Florentine Contessa—with whom, as I have told you, I in actual fact never exchanged a single word in my life. But that notion seemed most happily to have entirely left her mind—occupied, as it now seemed to be, solely by my attraction for Katie—so that my trip to *somewhere* became a recognised plan without much further discussion; it was only in regard to my destination that she seemed to think it necessary to reason with me, and when she found me to be so specially bent upon Genoa, I fancy that, with the subtlety of the female nature, she imagined that when I had convinced myself that the object of my affections was really not there, and that my journey had been to no purpose, I might be inclined to give up all further search and hopes in that direction. It ended, therefore, in being all settled quite amicably, and I made my mother promise not to listen to, or side with my aunt and her husband in their ridiculous interference with my plans or concerns; and having once pledged herself, I knew she would stick to the very letter of her word.

CHAPTER XIX.

"WHEN THE WILD GOOSE HAS GONE SOUTHWARD."
LONGFELLOW'S *Hiawatha*, ii. 163.

DIDN'T I just hug myself with delight as on the next morning I found myself actually off by the six o'clock train from Paris, once more free, strong and well, and my own master again.

I had not felt so well, and hopeful, and cheery in spirits for months past. By the way, I must tell you that on the afternoon of my last day, I went again to look up the Professor, but he had gone—evaporated. Nobody of whom I made inquiries in the house could tell me where, and he had left no sort of traces behind him. He must have departed the next, if not the evening of the very same day that I had been with him.

I am not going to favour you with a full, true, and particular account of my travels and adventures, through the perils of the mountain passes, with their everlasting snow, and terrific avalanches!

I suppose, very much like every one else, I found

the further I passed on through Switzerland from Geneva, that the extortion increased at an exact rate of inverse proportion to the accommodation. I made my way safely over the Simplon into Italy without having been attacked by wolves or bears, or even pillaged by any banditti, except those that were licensed in the guise of landlords, and custom-house officials.

At Milan I stayed for two days, and gaped, like all the rest of the world, at the beauties and exquisite details of that outrageous sham, the Cathedral there, with its imitation groined roof, which is nothing in the world but painted plaster; and its glorious effect of light striking upon the high altar, produced by a piece of yellow calico, or paper strained across an upper window, in lieu of stained glass. Not to speak of its couple of thousand and odd white marble statues, a vast number of which are nothing but plaster of Paris—that is, up beyond a certain level of ordinary reach and touch. I scrambled up by some scaffolding there was against one of the pillars and convinced myself of that fact, which I dare say, like other enthusiastic tourists, you will be loth to believe.

From Milan I worked across to Turin, that populated chess-board as it is, except that the squares into which it is cut are all the same dingy whity-brown colour.

There was not much to see there, except a few fine pictures in the King of Sardinia's Palace, and the Armoury—where, by the way, I wish they would not show the suit of one of their most distinguished heroes, either Emmanuel Philibert, or else Prince Eugene, I am not prepared now to state on oath which of those two it is, but I know that it is one of them, in whose highly tempered back-piece appear the marks of two great bullets. It does not look respectable, whichever of them it was, that gave their enemy a chance of hitting them in that place, and, if genuine, had better have been suppressed.

Having polished off Turin easily in one long day, I made my way as far as the railway was in those days completed, and on by diligence through the wildest mountain scenery imaginable, to that justly called "City of Palaces"—Genoa.

I must own, that I should like to have stayed on a few days longer than I did at Genoa; some of those magnificent buildings, and the pictures which they contained, were far beyond what I had even anticipated, and that is saying a good deal. But I found that there was a steamer starting for Leghorn on the second night after I arrived there, and so I determined to push on without delay.

I ordered my letters to be forwarded after me from

the *Poste restante*, and then, although I knew that I had not the remotest chance of finding Katie, or anybody connected with her there, I felt myself strongly attracted to the house which had been occupied by the De Lormes.

Of course I only heard from the porter's wife, whom I found sitting on the great doorway, what I knew a great deal better than she did—namely, that they had all left some weeks since for Paris. The good woman seemed glad of some one to gossip with, and invited me to go up through the still vacant apartments. I dare say you will feel inclined to laugh at me as a sentimental ass, when I confess that there was nothing I longed for more. I felt that I should like to see what that long dark passage I remembered so well would look like by daylight.

I went into the room in which I had received that chilling welcome from the colonel, and it was not without a sensation of trespassing that I found myself in the little chamber, which, as I was informed, had been inhabited by "La Bella Signorina." On the window ledge I saw a little shoe-buckle, which, pretending greatly to admire for the simplicity of its pattern, I asked if I might take as a souvenir.

The porteress instantly begged me to accept it, and assured me that she should be only too happy

to let me have the fellow to it, as her daughter, to whom they had belonged, had, she knew, started a new pair within the last day or two. Her daughter, she went on to explain, had been occupying that little room lately, so as to keep it aired until some new tenant should come into it.

"Confound her daughter, and her trumpery shoe-buckles!" thought I. "What did she mean by it?"

When we had again come down to the ground-floor, seeing, I suppose, that I somehow belonged to and took an interest in her late tenants, the honest woman produced a letter which her husband had received—it was some days since—from "La Signora;" but being in French, which language, though both he and herself could speak and understand tolerably, neither of them could make much out of when written. She therefore begged me to read and interpret it for her.

I was not a little amused to find that this letter, which was dated the very day after I had left them at Paris, was from my aunt herself, particularly charging the *concierge* that in case a certain tall English gentleman—of course meaning myself—should call to make any inquiries, that he was by no manner of means to be informed that the young lady had been sent down to Pisa; but that they—that is, the *con-*

cierge or his wife—were to be good enough to say that, to the best of their information, she was certainly gone either to Vienna, or Dresden, or somewhere northward in that direction.

Now that was not so bad from Mrs. De Lorme, whom I had heard so often finding fault with her neighbours and acquaintance for telling fibs and indulging in exaggeration. The sad fate of Ananias and Sapphira was one of her pet scripture applications to those whom she suspected, and not unfrequently accused, of aberration from the truth, and I am sure I had grown tired of hearing her oft-repeated vauntings of her own extreme love and strict adherence to truth, even, as she would say, in the simplest matters. The good lady so far overreached herself by this extra zeal and precaution of hers that her letter served of course to satisfactorily confirm me in what I had already ascertained to be nearly, though not till then quite, an absolute certainty.

I was off again that evening from Genoa by one of the French *messagerie* boats, and arriving after a very fair night's passage early at Leghorn, was up to Pisa by the first morning train. The only other occupant of the railway compartment in which I found myself was a sleek and healthy-looking priest, cleaner and better clothed than the usual specimens

of the ecclesiastical breed of bipeds which one generally meets on the highways and byeways of Italy. He made a great pretence of being deeply absorbed in his breviary all the way up during our half hour's journey; but more than once, when I happened to look suddenly across at him, I caught his eye peering at me slyly and suspiciously from beneath the broad brim of his great shovel-hat, which instantly reverted to the study of his, "very good book," as soon as he perceived that he was observed.

By the time I had made the most of the best apology for a bath which I could get, and a tolerable breakfast, thinking that it would be as yet too early for the visit which I meant at least to attempt, I made up my mind to stroll out, and first reconnoitre the exact whereabouts of La Casa Volpiani, the number of which upon the Lung'arno was too well imprinted upon my memory to make the search one of much difficulty.

Of course, according to the established *law of contraries*, I started, however, by turning to the left upon leaving the door of my hotel instead of the right, as it so happened that I ought to have done; and at the very first corner I turned, I ran bang against a man who, coming with his head down exactly in the opposite direction, nearly punched all the wind out of

my body by the violence of the collision. The monosyllabic expletive which naturally would have risen first to my lips in condemnation of the fellow's awkwardness was thus literally choked in its birth. But I was very much taken aback when as genuine a British "Damn it!" struck my astonished ears as I might perhaps have expected if I had been in Charing Cross, instead of within a stone's throw of the famous leaning tower of Pisa.

Why I should have been thus surprised, you may perhaps be inclined to ask, since that "Shibboleth" of our countrymen is as universally well-known and familiar in every port and city all over the world, as the British flag itself; and it was probably only into the arms, or rather on to the crown of some dunderheaded English sailor or, at any rate, traveller that I had thus blundered, who had naturally sworn at me in his native tongue.

A compatriot he certainly was, but not exactly in the shape that either you or I should have quite expected to tumble over.

Before I could even recover my breath I had recognised to my intense astonishment first the overgrown hat and black robes, and then, beneath the hat, the identical features of my priestly companion of the railway carriage.

"Hang it!" I cried, almost before I knew what I was saying, "you don't mean to say that you are an Englishman after all, then, in that queer toggery? Let me tell you, sir, that you have a most infernally hard head of your own, sir, and no mistake."

He looked at me, with his face as red as ten turkey-cocks; but whether at having made that unecclesiastical slip, or at my thus involuntarily and perhaps somewhat familiarly addressing him I cannot say, but he began gesticulating, bringing his shoulders and elbows well into play, while he jabbered at me in Italian, of which in those days I knew next to nothing.

"Come, that wont quite do, my reverend friend," said I; "there was too genuine a ring in that simple British oath which escaped you. I don't understand your Italian lingo, worse luck; but I am quite sure, shake your head as you may, that you can understand me well enough, though I stick to plain English."

But, with a greater profusion of bows and gesticulations, he chose to play his part of ignorance, and so working his way past me, and addressing himself to a respectable-looking individual who was just crossing over to our side of the street, I heard him ask in Italian to be directed to the Casa Volpiani, on the Lung'arno.

The familiar name of course caught my ear directly, and, standing as I still was within a few yards distance, I likewise profited by the polite stranger's directions. I let the priest go on round the next street corner, and followed him at a respectful distance, warily.

It is a strange coincidence, certainly, I thought to myself, that we should thus have already encountered one another twice within this short morning, and now find that we are both in search of the same house, in a city in which we both seem equally to be strangers; perhaps, after all, though, he may be in quest of some other person or family living under that same roof quite different and unconnected from those in whom I am interested.

I had ascertained the right house at any rate, but as it was still too early to offer to make a first formal call upon (as I fondly hoped to find her) the *unsuspecting* Miss Blobb, I contented myself at that time by marking my bearings, and then went off to fill up the time by lionizing the celebrated tower, the Duomo, and the Campo Santo. In the latter I was immensely taken with those marvellous old frescoes, which were then perfectly new to me, for I had never even heard of them, though since that time it has become the fashion to as much overrate and cry up

their merits, as a few years ago they were depreciated, and suffered to decay and perish—in some instances having been actually cut away for the admission of modern monuments.

Though not prepared to go to the absurd lengths of admiration, which it is now a sign of the only true and correct taste to lavish on them, as being unequalled and unapproached by any subsequent works of art, I was so well occupied in studying and enjoying their real merits, that impatient as I had naturally been for the time to pay my visit where I might hope to be once more in the beloved presence of Katie De Lorme, I was quite astonished to discover how quickly and agreeably nearly three hours had slipped away before I found myself again on the Lung'arno, at the door of the Casa Volpiani.

CHAPTER XX.

A VERY QUESTIONABLE STORY OF VERY QUESTIONABLE TRANSACTIONS.

I HAD prepared a very polite note for the virtuous Miss Blobb, requesting permission to wait upon her and Miss De Lorme with the last news, and—I am almost afraid my pen had so far availed itself of a poetic licence, as to write, "message" for the latter from her parents, whom I had left only quite recently at Paris. This I tendered with my card to the man who after some considerable delay answered my ring at the door. He seemed a surly sort of fellow, and having very deliberately and carefully spelt through the direction on my note and my name on my card, returned them to me, explaining in Italian that Signora Blobb, and the Signorina with her, had both departed from Pisa. He would have shut the door without further parley had I not luckily stuck my foot against it to prevent him.

"When had they gone?" I inquired, in the best apology of the language I could manage.

"Ten days since."

"Where? Had they left any address?" were the next questions, which I did my best to convey to him. He only gave me to understand in reply that he either could not or would not tell me, with a shrug which made me almost wonder that he did not dislocate his collar bones. Then he turned and called to some one within. For a moment I fancied that it was for assistance in shutting the door against me, for I still kept my foot firmly against it; but it proved to be his wife, a very skinny, rather shrewish-looking Englishwoman. As soon as she recognised me as a compatriot, and heard for whom I was inquiring, she pushed the surly fellow on one side, who retired grumbling, and with quite a pleasant smile (at least though not very successful, I felt sure that it was meant to be very pleasant), she invited me in, to what I felt honoured in perceiving to be her own private apartment, a very small chamber under the stairs, heated to within a very few degress of *asphyxié* point, by a brazier of charcoal burning in one corner.

Begging me to be seated upon the only available chair which appeared to be unencumbered by either some specimen of dress, furniture, or ornament, and which I contrived to edge as near the door as possible, with a feeble apology for the accommodation, by

way of preliminary, Madame Theodoro Croskanski (*née* Sniggers, as she took particular pains to impress upon me) proceeded forthwith to favour me with her own family history from its earliest dates. She had, as far as I could gather, served in the capacity of lady's-maid, and even confidential companion, in some of the first and highest of English families—two or three princesses at least, and sundry duchesses, marchionesses, and the inferior ranks of the peerage, had enjoyed the services, and owed much of, if not all the splendour and *éclat* with which they had held their places in society, to the care and special skill of their faithful Sniggers, both as a hairdresser and dress-maker; nor were these glorious reminiscences unmingled with regrets, which she laid before me in the shape of a perfect volley of startling questions, which, even if she had given me time, I fear that I should have been quite at a loss to answer.

"What could have induced her," she asked me in the bitterness of her heart, "after having been the favourite of some of the noblest and beautifullest in the land, to condescend to take a situation with any person of such a name as Blobb?"

I could not pretend to assign any motive, not knowing the exact circumstances of the case; but while I was attempting to frame some fitting expres-

sion of condolence, she had passed on without waiting to her yet more startling series of interrogatories, which seemed to be her favourite and rather peculiar style of narrative.

"How could she ever have been such a born fool and idiot as to take up with such a Polar bear for a husband?"

"How long since has she taken that step?" I ventured to inquire.

"Why, wasn't it only three weeks last Monday that she had been and got re-christened?—that is, I take it, had been received into the Roman Church —and hadn't she married like a new christened gaby, as she now felt herself to be, the self-same morning? How could she ever have allowed herself, as she had done, to be persuaded into a change of her faith, as a preliminary step to matrimony, for the sake of saving expense and trouble? Had she not a right to imagine that because her husband's name ended in *i*, that he must of course be an Italian, instead of, as he had turned out to her great disgust to be, a Pole, or a Polar as she called him? Wasn't he just a Polar by birth, and a regular Polar bear by nature?"

I did not care to follow her in her evident confusion of ideas as to the regions inhabited by those rough and savage animals, but tried to draw her attention from the enumeration of her own misfor-

tunes and regrets—after a proper amount of sympathetic expressions—by begging her to favour me with more particulars about her late mistress, the chaste Miss Blobb, and her charge, Miss De Lorme, whom, feeling that there was no exact need of more detailed explanations, I ventured to describe as a near connexion of my own, in whom I was much interested.

Madame Croskanski sprang up from the foot of her unmade bed, upon which she had been all this time sitting, with that easy negligence which bespeaks familiarity with the best of good breeding, she slapped one clenched fist into the palm of her other hand, and with a most unmistakeable wink and a whistle, which were not quite so suggestive of the *haut ton*, "Drat it!" she cried, "you're never Mr. Frank Lambard, sir, are you?"

I could of course but plead guilty to the impeachment, and ask her what she knew or had ever heard about me? She laughed a shrill laugh of derision at my simple question.

"Hadn't she just heard about me? She should think she had, indeed. Hadn't her late missus, Miss Blobb, received letter after letter, and warning after warning, from Miss De Lorme's ma, that if ever Mr. Frank Lambard should by chance turn up, he was to be driven off and never admitted, even to set eyes upon Miss Catharine, not at no price—oh, no! Hadn't Miss

Blobb received whole pages full of instructions of how Mr. Lambard was to be constantly runned down, and to be reported to be going to be married, and otherwise practically effaced from the memory and affections of the young lady? Leastways, wasn't them the chief tendencies of the letters, as repeated by Miss Blobb herself?"

The *ci-devant* Abigail had, I fancy, caught herself in a slip in owning her intimate acquaintance with the contents of my worthy aunt's letters, and tried to explain that her late mistress had been in the habit of requesting her to read her correspondence for her, her own eyesight failing her; and even confidentially inviting her comments and advice upon the same.

Miss Blobb was, as far as I could gather, a spinster of great zeal and experience in all matters of theological controversy. She seemed to have attached herself at different, though at no very distant periods, to the most extreme opinions at both ends of the doctrinal scale, dodging about occasionally, but by no means gradually, at various stages between the two. At one time a stout member of the Plymouth brother—or I suppose more correctly speaking, sisterhood—she had actually gone down to Rome with a full confidence in her own powers of converting the Pope himself; and indeed, had only failed in doing so in

consequence of evil counsellors, and those immediately about his Holiness refusing her an interview, and declining to allow her unrefutable arguments, when set out upon paper, to reach their destination.

My informant was, I must confess, almost ill-natured in her insinuations in regard to the arrangement of perfect community of goods into which Miss Blobb had, in full accordance with her then acknowledged creed, entered with two other ladies of the Plymouth persuasion: Miss Popper was the fortunate possessor of her own carriage and horses; Miss Scrunch owned a charming little villa in the neighbourhood of Lucca, in which for a time the happy trio established themselves, to dwell together in the full enjoyment of the most primitive innocence. Miss Blobb herself considering that she contributed more than an adequate share to the common lot, not in worldly goods indeed, for of those she had next to none, but in amenity of disposition, and natural talents and experience for agreeable society, which no right-minded person could deny were tenfold more valuable than the mere dross which so soon perishes and becomes lost. Which view, however, did not prevent Miss Blobb from occasionally seeking to carry out her doctrines of community of the said dross with so much zeal, that not only did her

personal expenses begin to exceed her full thirds, but she was more than suspected of having laid by certain sums, like a prudent woman as she was, against a doubtful future. The partnership had been in consequence dissolved, but perfectly amicably, as might be proved by the very satisfactory and even flattering encomiums which had been written by Miss Popper when applied to by her old friend and schoolfellow Mrs. De Lorme, in recommending Miss Blobb as a most fit and desirable temporary guardian for her favourite step-daughter.

Katie, as I was already aware, had only come under the worthy ladies' care about two months since: but in the meantime Miss Blobb had been actively employed in theological controversies: writing and distributing good little books of her own composing, and otherwise running the blessed risks of martyrdom—that is, so far as being ignominiously bundled out of the country by the ecclesiastical authorities—until at last boldly venturing to tackle no less an antagonist than an English Monsignore himself, instead of succeeding in converting him, she had somehow ended in becoming converted t'other way up herself, and had within the last few weeks been privately received into the Church of Rome.

"That's just how it was," continued Madame Cros-

kanski, with a dismal sigh; "and wasn't I just fool enough to let Miss Blobb convert me at the same time; and then that Polar bear declaring that the only impediment between us was thus removed, without having time to think even what I was about, didn't I consent, and so go and get christened over again by the name of Ursulina—and such a name too; wasn't it now?—and married all of a heap like? 'Bother Miss Blobb for her pains,' says I, whenever I think what a real born fool she has made of me, or leastways made me make of myself, you see."

Miss Blobb had said nothing about her change to the young lady, because she did not know how she might take it, and she couldn't well afford to lose the salary she received with her charge, as it was just all she had to live on.

But one morning there had arrived by post a newspaper — she particularly remembered the occasion, because it was the first day, and happened to be the immediate cause, of her new husband showing what a Polar bear he really was, for upon opening the paper to iron it before it went upstairs, he had remarked most ill-naturedly upon a particular marriage in it, being underlined and marked out with a cross, which he declared to be illegal, and had seriously talked of denouncing to the police. "Though he was her hus-

band, hadn't she therefore good private reasons for her belief that he was nothing more nor less than an Austrian spy?"

But to go on with her story about the said newspaper.

"Besides the announcement thus illegally marked out for special notice, was there not, to be sure, in the same journal a whole column devoted to the description of the ceremony, and full particulars of some English young lady who had been lately received into the church of Rome, and then taken the veil with all sorts of public pomp and fuss about it, that wasn't she, Mary Anne, or, as she was now, Ursulina Croskanski, satisfied in feeling certain that that was the actual turning point in Miss Katie's mind."

"Wasn't I, then, a standing behind her, a doing of her back hair, as Miss Blobb was a reading out to her from the sofa by the fire-side? and didn't I notice a bright flush of excitement and religious devotion come all of a sudden over her pretty face, which actually made me myself tingle all over with them religious feelings which are quite indescribable, though easily recognised when in play? As I stood there a watching her countenance in the

glass over the back of the head, couldn't I read as plainly all that was passing through her thoughts as if it had been printed there in letters of gold? 'Oh, Sniggers,' says she, 'don't pull my hair out by the roots;' and then a gentle sigh escaped her, and didn't she say, quite softly, to herself, 'Oh! that must be peace—that must be the only way to find true happiness in this world of trouble!' Miss Blobb wasn't the one to let such a chance go by, I promise you, and that very same day—I make no doubt, indeed I may confess that I know for certain that they came to a mutual confession of their religious sentiments, and an open understanding in the matter—was I therefore the least bit surprised when, within a week, Father Hommant, the English Monsignore, came by Miss Blobb's invitation—for didn't I happen to see the note!—to receive the dear young lady's first confession. Why, wasn't he himself an archdeacon, or a churchwarden, or some such high dignitary in our, that is, your, English Protestant church not very long ago as I have heard tell."

"Bless me!" said I, "is that the English priest who called here, and came into this house about ten o'clock this morning?"

The woman looked mystified, and declared that on

priest had been there to her knowledge; and that nobody could have come in unless admitted by her husband, or, what was more, without having been seen going upstairs by herself.

I knew better, for I had watched him in, and had seen the door closed again after his admittance; but I let the matter pass for the moment, while I inquired more particularly as to the exact time of departure and destination of Miss Blobb and her charge after the important step which she had thus taken.

"Wasn't it just ten days since?" was the question I received in reply. "Of course it was, the very next day after the arrival of that letter from Miss Catharine's mamma, announcing your Mr. Lambard's engagement and intended marriage to a lady of high rank and great wealth at Venice, I think she said. What! ain't you married then, or ain't you going to be? Well, for goodness gracious sake, sir, don't break my furniture!" she screamed out as, springing up violently, my chair fell back with a crash, and I brought my fist down upon her ricketty little table hard enough to shiver it into atoms. "Well, to be sure! Didn't we not only hear it, but didn't I see it with my own eyes? for I happened quite by accident to find the letter lying straight open before my very nose in one of my young lady's drawers when I was

a putting her things to rights, and hadn't my eyes actually taken it in, before my mind knew what they was about?—indeed, I may say that I had got over to the other side before I had made sure that it was not a washing-bill which Miss Blobb had desired me to look over. At any rate, there it was, and if I cannot tell you now the very words, I remember leastways the main sense of them, for they made, you see, a deep impression upon me.

"'Our old acquaintance, Frank Lambard,' it said, 'is not turning out well (or something to that effect). He behaves undutifully and ungratefully to his poor widowed mother, and now insists upon going off, we have, alas! too much reason to fear, to carry out his unhappy engagement with an Italian countess at Venice (or Vienna was it, sir? I am not quite sure), who, though reported to be very rich and very beautiful, is not likely to have received that education, or to be imbued with those high and pure principles of morality which can, after all, alone conduce to an English husband's true happiness.'

"Wasn't she already biassed, as I tell you before, by Miss Blobb? But wasn't that news—as I knew well, although she showed little or no sign—the real clencher? Wasn't their passports got for them by special interest that same Monday evening as was?

or how was it that the very next day, being Tuesday, they were able to set out straight away for Rome? Isn't it now my firm belief that the poor dear young young lady is gone to take the veil at once and for ever, as in course she'll find it to be; and didn't my late missus dismiss me at a moment's notice on the score of my having been and gone and got married, which wasn't it all her own doing quite as much as mine? and the only thing I want to know now is what that precious Miss Blobb and Father Hommant, besides the reward which a virtuous action always brings of itself, expects to make for themselves by the transaction?"

"I don't see exactly how they can hope to do that," I rejoined, almost mechanically, for I felt nearly stupified by the audacious iniquity of the intrigue of which poor darling Katie and I had been thus made victims. "Did you ever happen to overhear anything which could give rise to any such notion?"

Madame Croskanski shook her head slowly, but significantly. "Can you think it odd that I never happened to hear much myself?" she continued; "and because, why?—because didn't they always take such good care to talk together in nothing but Italian—which do I understand except when spoken

very slowly—whenever I was anywhere about? But when my precious husband, Croskanski, was on the box of the carriage in which they—that is, I mean, Miss Blobb and the Monsignore—used to drive out together sometimes, didn't they always talk in plain English, thinking him to be an Italian—just as wasn't I fool enough to believe?—and supposing that he talks nothing but Italian? But bless your heart! can't that man talk English just as well as you or I do? German, French, High Dutch or Low, it's all just the same to him? but isn't he too deep to let that gift of tongues of his be generally known? And didn't he, before I found out what a Polar bear he really was, repeat to me some of the plots and plans he had overheard, as to the prospects and property of the young lady, openly talked over and arranged between that precious pair, while he was perched up on the box there above them, as mum as a mouse, pretending to be quite unconscious, and wholly occupied in observing the manners and customs of them long-legged cameleopards, and other curious beasts of prey, which the Grand Duke has got there, in his farm at the end of the Cascini? Oh, he's a deep bear, I can tell you, sir, besides being a regular Polar one; and didn't he distinctly hear them discussing and

settling about what money and fortune Miss Catherine had of her own rights—leastways through her own mamma's rights, which was dead—and how she would have, whatever she was to have, entirely in her own power as soon as she comed of age."

CHAPTER XXI.

"ON, ON TO ROME!"

THEY had not yet given up the occupation of the apartments, indeed had left much of their property there, which showed an intention at least of returning some time or another, though for her part Madame Croskanski was prepared not to be surprised should they never do so, having her own reasons for expecting the particular result, which she had mentioned, to their present expedition. This she told me confidentially, and then offered to show me the rooms if I pleased to look at them.

It was not so much sentiment on my part, this time, that induced me to avail myself of her offer, as a presentiment which had suggested itself to my mind that I should find that sleek-looking priest still up there. The key was not where it ought to be. The shrew began to rail at her lord and master, who all this time had made himself scarce, for having mislaid or concealed it.

"But I have my master-key," she said, "which will do, even if we don't find the regular one stuck in the door."

"Why, isn't there some one in here?" was her next shrill interrogative exclamation, as, leading the way, she had flung open the door of the inner room—"Pray, sir, who the dickens are you, then?"

There, sure enough, sat comfortably at the table facing her, my ecclesiastical fellow-traveller of the morning. With a large drawer full of letters and papers on a chair by his side, and a writing desk, which I instantly recognised as poor Katie's private property, open before him, he was evidently occupied in making a regular inspection of its contents, which as far as one could judge in the hasty glance of the moment, he was systematically arranging, and docketing. He appeared, as well he might, somewhat startled by our abrupt entrance, and either not at first recognising me, as I stood behind in the shade of the doorway, or perhaps in the confusion of the first moment, forgetful of the *ruse* which he had tried on in our morning encounter of ignoring his own language, he spoke up with an assumed air of great dignity, but the most undoubted English:

"What do you want here? Pray what can you mean by this unwarrantable intrusion?"

"Not a bad accent that for a foreigner," said I, stepping forward, and the face of the fellow set me off laughing, for I saw that he felt guilty of having committed himself before he had even reached the end of his sentence. But my companion had in the meantime taken up the cudgels, as, screaming at the top of her shrillest voice, she went in at him with her questions tooth and nail.

"Intrusion, did you say? Who is intruding but yourself? How came you here, turning out all my missus's and young missus's boxes, and desks, and drawers in this audacious manner? Haven't all these things been left under my special care? But how did you get in? What is this but a regular case of downright burglary? And then do you dare try to face me and this gentleman, who is who? I should like to know, if he isn't the lady's own first cousin and nearest relation, with an impudent accusation of intrusion; why, who the dickens *are* you, I say?—and what do you mean by it?"

"Mr. Lambard is quite aware that he is not the cousin, or any relation to either of the ladies, late tenants of these apartments, and can have no manner of right or business here," replied the Priest, after a pause, and now trying to carry it off by speaking broken English. "I happen to know more about

that gentleman and his antecedents than he perhaps imagines," he added, looking anything but amiably at myself.

"Have you found any of his letters or correspondence among the lot you have been rummaging out there?" inquired the Abigail, rather sharply, having recovered her breath for more questions. "But how did you get in here? and how long have you been here? Isn't that what I have a right to know? as these apartments are left specially under my charge."

With a sort of insolent dignity he handed to us an open letter signed by Araminta Blobb, coming round from the other side of the table to do so. "Here is my written authority," he said; "these keys," rattling a small bunch, "have been entrusted to my care by the ladies to whom they belong, and who have commissioned me with the entire arrangement and packing up of their papers, valuables, and other property, as they probably will not be returning to Pisa. And by this key," to which he pointed, as it lay on the corner of the table, "I obtained my entrance, upon showing that letter which you have in your hand to the servant of the house, who admitted me this morning; if he did not remember or think it worth while to communicate these simple facts to his wife"——

"How do you know that?" she inquired.

——"Or to any stranger who may come here to pass himself off as a relation to the owner of this apartment, that is no business of mine. Good morning, sir; good morning, Madame Croskanski; I am, as you may perceive, very busy, and rather pressed for time."

And I am hanged if the oily rascal did not bow us both out of the door, which he politely held open, and then we heard him lock it on the inside upon us, before we knew what to reply. He certainly so far had the advantage on his side, that I of course felt that I had no shadow of legal right to interfere.

"Well, did you ever?" was the last unanswerable question put to me by Madame Croskanski, as we descended the stairs together, looking perhaps rather foolish at one another. I left her without another word; but I trusted to her being too intent upon closely questioning and pitching into her husband for having, as there could be no doubt he had, admitted that ecclesiastic, without intending the wife of his bosom to know anything of the matter, to notice that breach of manners on my part.

Remembering that the same steamer from which I had landed that morning, would probably not start again from Legborn until nightfall, I returned forth-

with to that port by the afternoon train in time to secure my passage on to Civita Vecchia, and from thence arrived in due time—that is, not above six hours later than the hour advertised, at Rome.

During my most dreary journey in the *rotonde* of the very crazy diligence I had turned over and over in my mind a hundred different vague plans and schemes for following up poor Katie, and rescuing her, even by a *coup de main* if necessary, from the clutches of the perfidious Miss Blobb and those villains in league with her.

The very morning after my arrival I lost no time in prosecuting my inquiries in every direction I could think of. First of all I set to work and carefully examined all the lists at every hotel, and at all the agencies for the lodging-houses. Then I tried all the different bankers.

Nothing could have been more civil than they all were; but being Catholics themselves, as I think almost without exception, when they had heard such particulars of the object of my earnest search as I thought fit to give them, their sympathies visibly slackened. The Consul, too, belonging also to the same faith, a most gentlemanly man, when he heard that I was no actual relation of the young lady, and

that she had come down to Rome accompanied by her accredited *chaperone*, declined any official interference, even had I been able to suggest to him in what manner or direction he could hope to exercise it. Then I thought of the clergyman of the Protestant congregation, and calling upon him, told my story, and begged for his advice and assistance. But he had only to say that he was there himself but upon sufferance, and that it was as much as his place and his very livelihood were worth to meddle with any of the priests or communicants of the predominant church. By way of consolation, however, he was good enough to give me, or rather make me pay a scudo and a half for a sermon, which he had lately preached upon the occasion of some Countess, Italian,—though of English birth, I think he informed me, who,—having gone over, had returned again to the right faith, having been brutally treated, and her nose put of joint, physically as well as morally, by a barbarous husband. He pressed upon my notice also a list of the prices of the sittings in his place of worship, and kindly offered to put down my name for one of the best, and nearest the corner in which the stove was placed.

My inquiries were all in vain, I could find out nothing; I could hear no kind of tidings of either

Miss Blobb or her charge for nearly a month, and then, when I at last, quite by chance, did so, it was too late—yes, too late—altogether. Though even if it had been sooner I do not know that it would have made much difference.

CHAPTER XXII.

ECCLESIASTICAL INTELLIGENCE.

"That tale repeated, puts all hope to flight;
Nuns, Prelates, Cloisters, swim before my sight."
Abelard's answer to Eloise (unpublished).

MISERABLE enough I was, I can assure you—all by myself in that great tumble-down city; tormented with weary doubts and suspense. Restless and wandering from place to place all day, many a night did I return to my lodging, worn-out and disheartened with constant disappointment, and turn into my bed, only to lie there, kicking and tossing about in a half-dozing state till morning, with my eyes kept fast closed, in vain hope of rest and forgetfulness, while my mind went on weaving the most improbable and wonderful romances in my head; romances such as you, perhaps, may have been half expecting me to have to recount, before all my hopes and best affections were doomed to be shattered for ever.

Either how, having strayed one evening to indulge my sorrows in the deepening gloom of some cloistered shrine, as the solemn vespers rose and fell in soft cadences, from that portion of the sacred edifice

screened off from the approach or gaze of the outer world, one young clear voice, most heavenly, most plaintive, as it rose above all the rest, struck my enthralled ear, which no sooner had I recognised than, knowing that all chance of happiness was torn from me for ever, I swooned, and remember no more until I found myself stuck out upon the cold church steps by the beadle—no, *sacristan* I believe is the correct title—to recover, just as a picturesque *contadino*, garbed in the graceful goatskin costume of his country, might be seen retreating with a bounding step, after having turned the last of my pockets inside out: or else, may be you have looked for a happier *dénouement* to my adventures, such as, for instance—

"How among the delicious fumes of costly frankincense, and the peals of the thrilling organ, just as the ancient prelate—a noble type of his noble race and country—was in the act of raising his eyes to Heaven, and the ruthless scissors were already inserted among the lovely tresses of the beautiful novice, fair as any angel: in another instant they would have fallen, when suddenly a wild hurrah was heard, which, ringing through the fretted arches of that ancient pile, caused all to spring from their seats, and thus involuntarily give room to our hero—(that would be

me, you know)—who, dashing into the midst, seized the lovely girl in his strong arms, and before any of that astonished assembly could recover themselves, had borne the helpless form, tresses and all, upon his shoulder away! away! far beyond pursuit, into the wildest depths of the pathless Apennines!"

Or it might have been more to the purpose had you imagined me to have been foiled in my audacious and sacrilegious attempt, and to have been held tightly bound by four swarthy ruffians, fit myrmidons of the Inquisition, and thus grinding my teeth, and uttering a thousand maledictions, compelled to witness the conclusion of the ceremony; while the fair bride of Heaven herself, wrapped in a celestial rhapsody of feeling—quite unconscious of her Francisco's presence, as she was of all other worldly thoughts and associations—abjured her wealth, her rank, her beauty, and everything on earth, and so passed away from before his very eyes and those of the world—for ever!

There I am again, making grim jokes, and turning into ridicule the memories of the most miserable chapter of my life; which sometimes even now come back to me in my dreams, and at odd times with all the heart-wearing, stifling feelings of disappointment, and hopes cruelly blasted, still fresh and vivid as

ever. It so happened, however, in real fact to be in a most particularly *unromantic* way that I eventually did hear the details of the ceremony by which my last hopes and affections were finally doomed to be altogether extinguished.

I was dining at the *table d'hôte* of one of those great hotels in the Piazza di Spagna, when I happened to overhear an old lady telling her neighbours how she had been at great pains to gain admission to a ceremony which of all others she had most desired to see; that of a nun taking the veil, and had been so very fortunate as to have had that wish gratified, on only the very Sunday before, having by great favour, been allowed to be present at the consecration of a most lovely and charming English young lady, which had taken place in the convent church of Sta. Trinita di Monti; and then she went on to enlarge upon a full description of that young lady's private and family history, in the smallest details of which she seemed to have taken the greatest possible interest, while I actually sat there listening to her across the table as if I were spell-bound. The strange thing was, that in spite of all my most diligent inquiries and searchings after Miss Blobb and that poor girl, which had been so totally in vain, although I

could find nobody who had ever even heard of any such persons, now, at least half-a-dozen of these people promiscuously assembled together at a public table seemed to know, or at least pretended to know, all about them.

The great law of contraries again! But there I sat, as I say, listening like any other stranger to the discussion.

One gentleman took on himself, with all due politeness, to correct the lady who had originally started this most interesting topic, by asserting that she must be wrong, in describing the young lady, as she had done, as but only quite recently converted to the Romish faith, as she must necessarily have passed a whole year's noviciate before she could have been allowed to take the veil.

That thought had somehow never occurred to me in my distress and suspense, and for an instant, as I heard it, it even then struck a spark of hope.

"Begging your pardon, sir," snapped the lady, who evidently did not like being interrupted, "but in this particular case there was a special dispensation, personally obtained from the Pope by Monsignore Hommant himself. You are perfectly right, sir, in regard to such being the usual rule, but you, Mr. Poser, are

not, I suppose, going to dispute his Holiness's full power of dispensing with such rules whenever he may think fit to do so."

Mr. Poser had only just gone over within a few months himself, so he was shut up; and the lady went on with her account with increased confidence.

"I happen to have the very best authority for knowing all about it, as I do, probably better than anyone else in this company, or even in all Rome itself," she added, as she looked up and down the whole length of the table defiantly, to see if anyone was going to take up her challenge. "Miss Blobb, who was one of the oldest friends and the guardian of the young lady in question from her childhood, happens to be also one of my oldest and most intimate friends" (this was said in a very loud aside to her immediate neighbour).

Either she was inventing, or Miss Blobb must have lied most considerably to her oldest and most intimate friend; for she described poor Katie, whose name she had not even got right, but called it De Logne, as an orphan of great wealth and landed property, as having been the most fashionable beauty —or the *belle*, as the old cat in her own vulgar way expressed it—of the very cream of society for the

last two London seasons; but having been engaged to, and cruelly turned over by a gentleman to whom she had been deeply attached, that she had wearied of the world and all its vanities, and as soon as she had heard of her false lover's marriage with some other lady of even greater wealth, and higher rank, had, in spite of all remonstrance and persuasion on the part of her friends, taken the decided step of entering a convent, for which ceremony she (the narrator) had, by the kind interest of her friend Miss Blobb, been fortunate enough to procure one of the very few tickets that were to be disposed of.

"What was the gentleman's name?" inquired a thin spinster next above me, who had taken breathless interest in the sad narrative.

The lady was not at liberty to state, but she did not mind mentioning so much, as that he was a member of a ducal house.

There was another pause, as each person mentally assigned to the perpetrator of this outrage the name of the ducal house most familiar to him.

Mr. Poser, with a look which showed that he knew something of, if not himself actually connected with, the peerage, went through the family names of all the ducal houses on his fingers.

"Who the deuce was it told her he was married?

Was that on Miss Blobb's authority, pray?" I asked, suddenly, in a loud, hoarse tone, while I was really surprised to hear my own voice; it was as if some one else was speaking with it.

"Yes, sir, it was Miss Blobb, if you have no objection; but if that ain't sufficient for you, as you seem to take such an interest in this dishonourable person, who perhaps may be a friend of yours, I don't mind telling you that on the very Sunday before the ceremony I have been describing, I happened to be paying a visit to my dear friend Miss Blobb, when a gentleman, who was also another most intimate friend of hers of long standing, who had only just arrived from England, came in to introduce his newly-married bride—a most lovely creature with, as I was told, an enormous fortune. He fully confirmed the story which Miss Blobb had heard; indeed, I think he said he had been present at the marriage. At any rate, I am quite sure that he knew, and was intimately acquainted with, all the persons concerned."

"Was—*Katie*," I had almost slipped out, but caught myself in time—"was the young lady you mention, also present when the fellow was repeating his gossip?"

"Fellow, indeed, sir! No more a fellow than yourself," she screeched out, like an angry parrot. "Miss Blobb, let me tell you, is not a lady to consort with

fellows; but as you seem to take so very warm an interest in the matter, I do not mind telling you that Miss Delogne, perhaps feeling naturally shy under the circumstances, had run hastily out of the room when the names of Mr. and Mrs. Gorles were announced."

"Gorles himself turned up again," I exclaimed, with an involuntary oath. "By G——, I expected it was him!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

WANDERINGS, WONDERS, AND WARNINGS.

THERE was no use in my staying on at Rome, though I felt that I did not the least care where I went, or what might become of me. Before I set out, however, I took a spiteful pleasure in writing to the De Lormes a full and detailed account of all that I had heard and gathered of the fate of poor Katie. I congratulated them on the success of their schemes for keeping the poor girl and myself apart, as well as upon their choice of so trustworthy a guardian as the excellent and evangelical Miss Blobb.

Expecting, as of course I well might, that the news would bring them down to Rome without an hour's delay—but, as I afterwards heard, without any satisfactory result, for they could not even obtain permission to see, or for a very long time even find out where their unfortunate daughter had been moved off to—I made myself scarce out of the Holy City, without caring to leave behind me any directions even, for letters or parcels to be forwarded after me.

By the merest chance, on my way southwards, I fell in with a very good fellow. I never even knew his name, for I never happened to ask him what it was, while we were together; and though on parting we faithfully promised to write, it was fully a week after our separation that it occurred to me that he had never mentioned to me how to direct to him. I suppose, like most other individuals, he must have had a name; but as he was the only civilized being I saw, or with whom I was thrown, for that three or four months, I never found any necessity for using it.

He was a civil engineer, surveying for the railway then just projected from Naples. We fraternized and lived together on the most friendly terms, sometimes lodging in some out-of-the-way village or old forsaken city; sometimes, as the warm weather came on, under canvas, and we got far down among the very wildest parts of Calabria, and right away to the extreme southern shores of quite the toe of Italy, where we had no end of first-rate sport, shooting wild boars and all sorts of game, feathered as well as four-footed. Thence in the course of time I went across to Sicily, and having worked my way through some of the most unfrequented parts of that island, turned up next at Algiers: there, whom should I fall in with, but my old friend the Professor Zauber himself. He had

been sent from Paris on a special mission among the Arabs and Kabyles, to exercise some of his wonderful powers, and to try and meet the native prophets and magic seers (Aïssaoua they call themselves) upon their own ground.

For upwards of three years I was with him, off and on, regularly living among the wild tribes in the desert; and a gloriously happy life it was. I had fully recovered all my old strength, pluck, and sound health; and, determined to drive all my past bothers out of my mind, went regularly in for enjoyment.

Making our head quarters at a place which rejoiced in the lively name of *Titery-Tach*, and then afterwards farther south in the land of *Zab*, we dressed like the natives, lived like them, and shared their tents and their salt with them.

My own relations had no idea of what had become of me, though occasionally I contrived, without betraying my whereabouts, to convey an intimation to my Mother that I was still alive and well. I thus had nearly succeeded in banishing from my mind all memories and sorrows of my past life, though sometimes a heaviness, or a qualm of heart-sickness would come over me for a season, as, in spite of myself, I could not help thinking of Katie, and wondering

whether or not she repented the rash step she had been so basely persuaded and cheated into taking.

I was reviving from one of such occasional dismal fits, when it occurred to me to apply to the Professor to cure me of them effectually, as I remembered that he had done formerly for De Lyons, and had offered to do for me. I mean, by extracting the whole mental apparatus of disappointed love and affections, which, like addled eggs, had been spoilt by keeping, from my organization for ever. But now that I so much wished it, he somehow seemed chary about subjecting me to any of his scientific operations. He said something, I remember, about the over-excitability of my nature, and seemed to have scruples, which I appreciated, though I would not allow, in regard to the responsibility which he should feel from my being, as I was, so entirely alone with, and dependent upon, him. But I told him that I trusted him implicitly, and at last prevailed with him.

Strangely enough, I can no more tell you whether I remained in the state of sleep into which it was necessary for him to throw me, twenty minutes, or twenty hours, or even twenty days; as long as I woke up again, as I certainly did, perfectly well, and cured of the pain which had been so cruelly gnawing at my heart-strings, it did not much matter as to the time,

whether it was more or less; for the fact is, that we kept no sort of count of time, and except by the changes of the moon, of which for my part I very soon lost the reckoning, days, weeks, and months rapidly passed by unmarked and unnoticed.

I should not have said that it had been above six or nine months at the outside, that we had been leading that free and unshackled life when it came to an end; though the head Scheikh declared it to have been just two years, and, what was more, proved his statement, by the simple fact that a young Arab foal which had been born in the same tent in which I was sleeping, and had been presented to me soon after our first joining the tribe, had grown up strong enough to carry one of the youngsters, who had undertaken to break it in for me.

The Professor, who had thoroughly established his mission of rivalling, and thus lowering, the power of the native magicians in the eyes of their own people, had been, as I could perceive, for some time anxious to return to civilized life. And so, most reluctantly, I made up my mind to tear myself away from what I shall, I know, always look back to as the happiest days of my existence.

We got back to Algiers, and then coasted along eastward till we came to Egypt; there the Professor

was quite in his element; and it was then only for the first time I thought him rather inclined to show off his scientific attainments and superior power; though small blame to him either, for it was indeed a perfect caution, as old *Taraxacum* would have said, only to see the old fellow among the sphinxes and hieroglyphics.

When we were working our way up the Nile, we used to land continually, and go down exploring into all sorts of holes and caverns, and subterraneous labyrinths, all choked up with rubbish, under some of those temples and ruins, and he always knew all about them, and could find his way in and out as if he had been brought up and lived all his life amongst them—as indeed I was aware that he had done, long ago in bygone days. He could read all those queer old hieroglyphics right off, just as I should read a hand-bill or royal proclamation.

As for the famous necromancers and magicians, he could, allegorically speaking, knock their very heads off at their own little games; so that, from at first despising and hating him, as I saw they did, they became afraid of, and positively worshipped, him.

He, however, was not above, as he himself told me, learning much from them, and adding greatly to his own scientific and supernatural powers.

Though nothing could have been nicer and kinder than the old fellow was to me—and thrown together as we were, I really became attached to him as a brother—yet I never could get him to give me much of his confidence in regard to those wonderful and mysterious pursuits of his. He always did his best to dissuade me, though in the kindest possible manner, from dabbling in anything of the sort; there were, he declared, some temperaments and natures to which such studies, and even the possession of such knowledge, were physically dangerous.

I had, as I declared, no fear of such consequences myself, and I urged him more than once to cast my horoscope for me, but he never would; and, though I pressed him strongly, he used to put me off with some evasive excuse, and it always seemed to make him sad thus to be pressed when he had once refused.

One evening when we were as near such subjects as he would ever allow me to bring him, I had been talking to him of Gorles and the strange influence which he certainly had so often exercised against me. He assented to there being no doubt great truth in the fact, though not easily to be accounted for; and, as he had on a former occasion done, advised me through life to keep out of his way as much as I possibly

could, and warned me most solemnly never, under any provocation, to run counter to, or to think of personally assaulting, him.

"Why, what would be the consequences?" I asked. "Could the little monster cause my death, do you mean to say?"

"Worse, perhaps," he said. "He may cause that from which death itself would prove a happy release. Let us trust not, but beware of him;" and then the Professor seemed sorry for having said so much, and it was ever so long before I could get another word out of him.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Of this strange life, mark the yet stranger end—
Thereby hangs a tale."

Old Comedy.

LIFE: CHANGES AND CHANCES.

THE more intimately I grew to know the Professor—and of course thrown so entirely together for all that time as we were, you might naturally expect that we should have become very intimate—the more puzzled I was, and seemed, even less than at first, to be able at all to make out or understand that strange, paradoxical character.

I was much surprised to discover, and from my description of him and his pursuits you will probably hardly anticipate, that there certainly was a deep vein of genuine and real religious feeling in that strange man's composition. Once when we were, I remember, lying stretched under our tent with our *narghiles* softly bubbling between us, our conversation turned upon the subject of the *beau ideal* of human happiness. The Professor said that if his life were to come over again he should choose that of a hermit, or, rather, a monk—that is, not an uneducated, superstitious,

guzzling, lazy, dirty vagabond as of the present day, but as monks were in the good old mediæval times, when societies of holy and learned men were formed to live together in friendship and brotherhood, without any need of thought or care about worldly matters; whose whole time was occupied in abstruse study and contemplation, and whose only recreation consisted in works of active charity and administering to the wants and relief of others.

Deep study, he said, was, perhaps, on the whole, the greatest pleasure which the human mind was capable of enjoying; and that if he had not from early education and association been turned to the pursuit of metaphysical science, he declared there was nothing in which he should have taken so much interest and delight as in the study of Theology!

I thought to myself of the glimpse of his destined end, which we had seen at that memorable *séance* in his chamber at Dresden, and wondered whether the Professor's views had always been the same, or that, now knowing his own fate, whether his feelings had not been since, though perhaps almost unconsciously, biassed, or even designedly trained into submission to what he believed to be inevitable.

I should probably have suggested some such idea, only I knew that upon the slightest allusion to that

night the Professor would have pretended complete ignorance of what I was talking about, and have shut up altogether, which I should have been sorry for, as I was interested in hearing his views upon so important a subject.

He told me that he had originally by birth and education belonged to the Romanist faith, but that in the course of his life he had made himself thoroughly acquainted with, if not actually embraced, the tenets of most of the existing forms of religion in turn, not choosing to take that in which he happened to be born as necessarily infallible, but having earnestly inquired and sought to decide by personal experience which was the best and really the true one.

Mahometanism, though of course fallacious, he considered to have many excellent points; the Brahmin, in some respects, to be even better, particularly as to the strict and constant discipline of the soul. The Buddhist he had tried, but could not make much of. He had then returned to Christianity, firmly convinced that it was the right and only true faith, and that the Protestant, except in the one matter of discipline, was undoubtedly, in his opinion, the most perfect and nearest the right of all.

I will say for the old fellow, that in practice, as well as theory, a kinder-hearted, more thoroughly chari-

table man I never saw. Among those poor Bedouins his liberality and untiring assiduity, if any of them were ill or in want, was beyond everything; and they all loved him in return like a father, and treated him with the respect, and almost the worship, which they pay to their own most holy men, or *Marabouts*, as they call them: and as for truth and strict honour, and upright, conscientious dealing, even in the smallest things, I always found the Professor more particular and scrupulous than almost any gentleman with whom I was ever thrown, in any country, or any position in life.

I gently ventured, upon the occasion I have been speaking of, just to express a hint, rather in the form of a doubtful inquiry, as to whether he did not ever find any difficulty in reconciling his religious scruples with his dabblings in what might be considered by some prejudiced people to be *diablerie* or the black art; such, for instance, as his transactions with, and personal communication with, that mysterious personage at Dresden. At first I really almost thought he was going to deny the fact altogether, as De Lyons had had the audacity to do, if you remember, for he paused and gave me one of his strange, fixed looks for some minutes.

I always fancy that those fellows had cunningly flattered themselves that my serious illness, which

had overtaken me that very same night, would have entirely driven that curious episode out of my head and memory.

But after a pause the Professor owned so far, that he certainly had conceived, and gone to certain lengths in carrying out that object, whether successfully, or not, he did not choose to admit; but that there was a vast difference between being the friend of, and putting oneself under terms of obligation with, powers of another sphere, or by dint of science and by a skilful use of some of the hidden spells and secrets, of what may be supposed by the ignorant to be supernatural knowledge, gaining a command over and subjecting such beings to one's will.

"Are we not," he asked, earnestly, "expressly taught and encouraged to resist the great Prince of Evil with all our might? and if we can manage, not only to resist, but even to subjugate, him, is not that surely a still more glorious triumph? Those secrets of spiritual power are nothing new in themselves, they are facts which have always existed since the earliest commencement of creation, equally open to any one person to discover just as much as another, if he only chooses and cares to enter into and investigate those hidden depths of knowledge. It is true that very few, comparatively, do care to do so; but surely that rarity

of taste cannot, in itself, make it wrong or a sin for those who do happen to be so inclined."

Then he changed the subject, which he evidently did not quite like, and I only once again got him at all near it. It was when we were in Egypt, and, of all places in the world, on the very tip-top point of the highest of the Pyramids—not that it is exactly a point either, being a space of many feet square. We had taken our luncheon up with us, and having utterly discarded the assistance of all those howling ruffians of Arabs and donkey-boys who torment one like flies, were thoroughly enjoying the wide-spread prospect and deliciously fresh air that we found up at that elevated position.

It was the lightness and freshness of that air, I suppose, to say nothing of a bottle of Allsopp's pale ale which we had emptied and then hurled down into the plains below, which exhilarated my spirits so much, and made me feel so jolly and particularly light-hearted, that I burst out singing, "Rule, Britannia!" with a drum accompaniment on the top of my glazed sailor's hat, which I used to wear with about five fathoms of linen wound round it as a turban.

"That is a dreadfully mournful dirge which you are there performing," remarked the Professor, who was seated on the next step below me. "Have you no

merrier tune than that in which to give vent to your musical feelings ?"

"Well, tune up yourself, Professor," I said, for the moment, rather hurt in my national feelings.

He grinned as he took my long sharp-bladed knife, with which I had been spreading potted *sooman* (Anglicè, quail) upon biscuit and butter, in his left hand, and holding his own stouter blade in the other, commenced a most skilfully-performed prelude, with base and treble all complete, upon the sharp edge of one of the well-worn steps on which he was sitting—and then broke forth with his voice into that identical rollicking *barcarole* which you may have often heard me whistle, when I happen to be considering anything very particularly—the one, in fact, which I heard that night performed by the Contessa Sottonebbia at Florence.

"Bravo! Mein Herr Professor!" I cried; and joined in the air so familiar to me, with all the best powers of my lungs.

"You have a good ear for music, at any rate, my friend," said the Professor, "thus to have picked up that air so quickly; for I know that you never could have heard it before, as I composed it originally myself, and it has never yet been put upon paper—even in manuscript."

"That may be," I said, "but I have heard it long ago, sung by a lady——" For the moment, until I thus spoke, I had completely forgotten the connecting link between him and the said countess, but then as it suddenly flashed through my mind, I said, indiscreetly—"Why, to be sure, it was the lady whom we saw that night, that we had up the—your mysterious visitor, you know, in your own room at Dresden."

If the Professor had unwittingly sat himself down upon the sharp point of my long-bladed knife, he would, I think, scarcely have jumped round with a greater start than he did at my words.

"*Hundert tausend donnernde Teufel!*" he cried. "What can you mean? What lady can you, or any one else, pretend ever to have met or heard sing that or any other tune in my room at Dresden, or anywhere else? I who for the last six years have never once exchanged a word with any one of that accursed sex! —having indeed too good cause to rue their existence even upon earth."

He was prodigiously enraged, and his mane almost stood up on end, like the squills, as the poet says, of the peevish porcupine. I tried to soothe him by apologizing, and explaining as gently as I could, that I certainly had seen the lady, though only for a few seconds—and then perhaps only her spirit, and not

her body—in his apartments; but undoubtedly the same whom I had afterwards recognised at Florence some months later, and had there by chance overheard play and sing that identical tune. As to the first part of my allegation, he, as usual, chose to pretend to misunderstand, and even ignore the subject altogether; he had, I suppose, his own good reasons for doing so—at any rate, I had become so used to that fancy of his that I let it pass—but when I came to the fact of meeting the Contessa in company with Melchior Gorles, and went on to tell him all that I knew and heard about her subsequently, the strange old fellow—though almost as if in spite of himself—showed a deep interest, and was evidently greatly moved; for throwing up his arms wildly over his head, he suddenly cried out, as if in the agony of bygone bitter memories—

"Oh, Giuletta! Giuletta! for your sake I have been ruined in this world and the next! Through you I have learned to shun and loathe, and even curse the sex to which my own sainted mother belonged!"

As we came down from our eminence jumping and dropping from step to step, and stopping to rest at intervals, the Professor, by hints and scraps, gave me a sort of outline of his early history—at least, so far as it was connected with the faithless Giuletta. It was very much the old story.

After a virtuous and well-regulated youth—having by his own talents and exertions made for himself an excellent start in life, and early obtained a distinguished appointment in the ancient University of Padua, he had in an evil hour met, and, for the first time in his life, fallen in love—madly in love—with that wretched woman, and, as I could see from his own confession, in no time regularly gone to the bad;—quarrelled with his relations, broken an aged mother's heart—thrown up his appointment, lost his character, position, everything and every chance he had in the world;—and when he was a beggar, and had no more to sacrifice for her sake, then she had sent him about his business, spurned him, and insulted him.

Stung with rage and bitter remorse, disgraced and humiliated, with ruin and positive starvation staring him in the face, he had fled away, he knew not and cared not whither; and having worked his passage on board one of the steamers from Trieste down to Alexandria, had found his way up to Cairo, and there accidentally fallen in with an old Egyptian, who, as he declared, was in fact a priest of the still secretly existing worship of Isis; with him he lived for some time, and then first acquired the rudiments of those deep and mysterious sciences to which he had since so closely devoted himself.

He had never told me so much about himself before; and we never again had another opportunity for such confidences, as within a few days we came away from the land of the Pharaohs, homeward bound.

The Professor and I parted company at last, with many mutual expressions of regret and affection, at Malta—though we occasionally heard from and of one another; and I have never met the strange old fellow since—that is, not to say met—though within the last few months since my return to England, I could almost swear positively that I had seen him under the most unlikely and, perhaps, unexpected circumstances.

I had not been long arrived, when I fell in with my old friend McTrigger, who took me down to the country-seat of a relation of his in the county of Norfolk, for two or three days' first-rate shooting; on my return, having unfortunately made a mistake about the time of the train, I found that I had to kick my heels for an hour or so in the highly respectable, though not very lively, city of Norwich; to kill the time I picked up a sharp street-boy, whom I saw loafing about the station, and chartered him to take me to see the principal objects of interest in that ancient place, such as the Cathedral, the outside of the county jail,

on the top of which, as he informed me, the celebrated Mr. Rush had a few years previously expiated his offences; the principal pump, the market-place, and so on. We had fully exhausted these several lions, when my ingenuous young conductor informed me confidentially that, in his private opinion, the finest sight of all was yet to be visited in the shape of the new monkery, as he called it, which he informed me had been lately set going, "the inmates of which shaved the tops of their heads, like barbarous apes, and dressed themselves, and even walked about the streets, in horse-cloths, with ropes round their waists, for all the world like regular guys."

"It is well worth walking a mile only to see such comical fellows," he said—"which we are pretty sure to do, if we keep a sharp look-out through these railings."

So, having nothing to do, I went with him, and sure enough, there were a couple of them, in the regular conventional monastic garb, shaved head, long sackcloth garments, regular sandals on their feet, and all quite complete.

"Now ain't they a queer lot, and no mistake?" said my guide, clambering upon the railings and rattling with a stick, in order to make them turn round, as if they were some curious sort of animals in one of the paddocks of the Zoological Gardens. "They're Brother

Cyrænius and Brother Athanasius, they two are; I knows 'em pretty well all by their funny names by this time, for I have seen a deal of them lately, having been here to show them to a sight of gentlemen like yourself. Now look sharp, sir, for I'll just whistle to make them look round this way."

He so far succeeded in his intention, that they both suddenly raised their heads at the same time, and as I looked with some curiosity at them, it certainly struck me instantaneously that the elder of the two, in this strange disguise, was no other than our old friend the Professor himself: whether he also on his part recognised me at that distance, and through the railings, I cannot say, but on perceiving us staring in at them, they both retired very precipitately into their monastery, or whatever they call their institution, and I saw them no more. I think I should have been less positive of his identity, and more astounded than I was at seeing my old friend in that costume, had I not called to my recollection the vision I had formerly had of him, as determined to end his days in exactly that identical costume.

CHAPTER XXV.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

"Without a sigh he left to cross the brine,
And traverse Paynim shores, and pass earth's central line."

Childe Harold, canto lxi.

THE summer of 1854 was drawing to a close. I having by that time some sort of compunctions at never having seen, or even heard of, my mother for so long, made up my mind to run back to England.

When one has been away for any time, what a lot of changes and events, great and small, have always somehow taken place in one's family and home, which one fancies that if you had stayed quietly on, leading a humdrum life, would never have happened. The first piece of news which I received upon my arrival at home, or, rather, at my mother's place, Danesbury, was, that my aunt Mrs. De Lorme was dead. I had been so long without seeing any English paper, or receiving any letter, that I had not a notion of the sad event. Though I cannot pretend to say that after her treatment of me, personal as well as general, in all those manœuvres of hers about poor Katie, I was

what *Taraxacum* would have called, "entirely wrapped up head and ears" in my love for the poor old lady, I was certainly shocked at her death; though, by the same token, it had happened so long ago, that her husband the Colonel had had time to bewail her loss quite decently for the orthodox year and a day, and had consoled himself again by venture number three.

He had indeed married again, or, rather, according to the severe view which my poor Mother took of it, had submitted to be married against his own will and inclination, by no less a person than Miss Blobb herself, who now ruled the poor man with a rod of iron.

Don't you remember my astonishment at finding that we had come up in the same carriage with her from the Kingston Station on that Derby day that you and I met? That was the veritable Araminta Blobb—now Mrs. De Lorme, number three—who had so much to do with my unhappy destinies, though till that day I had never set eyes on the woman. She herself it was, sure enough, accompanied by her stepson—my precious cousin Ferdy—to whom, if you recollect, I made myself known, after amusing ourselves by helping him to make such a ridiculous fool of himself; and her companion, too, don't you remember, whose face I knew all the time, but could not for the life of me remember where I had previously met her? Well,

since I have been telling you my story—and many things long forgotten have thus arisen in my mind—it has occurred to me that that oppressed female was no other than the virtuous Araminta's *quondam* maid—though, I suppose, now promoted to be companion—Madame Croskanski, *née* Sniggers, released, let us hope, from her Polar bear, either by his demise or desertion—or, perhaps, divorce; though I could not remember her at the time, that it was she herself, I now feel certain.

My Mother very kindly took much pains and circumlocution in breaking to me, as gradually as possible, her next piece of bad news. I had guessed what it was to be, long before she had, as she fondly imagined, even broken the preliminary ground. Poor Katie was gone for ever, also; she had been ailing and pining, as it seemed, almost from the very commencement of her convent life. Her relations had been allowed to see her occasionally—but never alone—and she had never complained to them. As to her last illness, they seemed to have received but very slight particulars—indeed, from what they could make out, the actual end appeared to have been almost quite sudden.

I perceived, as I say, that as my Mother broke this fact to me, she did so in much fear and trembling, as

to what the effect might be upon myself. She was evidently prepared for some strong demonstration of feeling on my part—and one would have thought that she would have been relieved, at least, at finding her expectations were wrong—but so oddly are women constituted, that she really seemed vexed, and to take it almost as a wrong when she found that I did not break out, or was not so much cut-up as she had anticipated. I do not mean to say that I was not really very sorry and much shocked at the unhappy death of the poor young girl—I was so; but I was not staggered and smitten down as I should have been two years before, or had I not, as at the very time I felt conscious, been relieved of my feelings by the scientific skill of the Professor.

Her death, by the way, must have been, as near as I could judge, precisely coincident in time with that event. I pitied and felt grieved for her fate, as an abstract cause for such natural feelings, but still quite entirely distinct from any selfish or personal interests of my own.

My Mother, I know, in her heart, thought me selfish and unfeeling; which is just exactly—from a combination of circumstances which she would not have listened to, even if I had tried to explain them to her—what I was not. My grief, though not so

deep as it would have been, was sincere enough, and perfectly disinterested, and solely for the poor girl's own sake, without a scrap of self in it.

My Mother did her best to persuade me to settle down, and live on with her quietly at Danesbury, and I fancied at first that it might have suited me, and had almost made up my mind to do so; but unluckily she began to make me feel my complete dependence upon her too soon; I couldn't stand it. I had never forgotten that miserable suspicion against my morality; that, perhaps, one would not so much care about, though it is too bad to be accused and suspected when you haven't even had any change for the imputations cast upon you; but my solemn word and honour as a gentleman, my oath and declaration, she had refused to receive, and had in so many words repudiated, and that still rankled in my mind, you see. And even now, after all that lapse of time, she would not own that she had done me wrong, or allow me to clear myself by a full explanation of the real facts.

We most unfortunately one evening got back—the deuce only knows how—to that unhappy delusion of hers, at Florence, and should have had all that old story, with its miserable bitterness, over again, as fresh as ever, if I had not jumped up and run off to bed. It did not occur again, but I saw that it would

never do. Then it was that I determined to find out exactly the real state of my prospects and worldly means, and paid that most unsatisfactory visit of which I have already given you an account, to those lawyer fellows in London.

I learnt enough from them to convince me that I must seek to know no more; and that the best chance of not infringing the unknown and eccentric conditions of my foolish old Grandfather's will, would decidedly be to get right out of the reach of all concerned, as entirely as possible. Indeed that was the advice of my old friend the Professor, to whom I had written very fully on the subject.

"Take yourself," he wrote, "to some other part of the world, completely out of the reach of all who are interested in your committing yourself; you know not who may be spies, or secret enemies, but if far away from all, should you even unwittingly transgress these mysterious conditions, it will not be easy for them to prove that you have done so, if unable to declare when and where you have been at the times alleged." As the sage's advice exactly suited my own ideas, I of course took it.

Just at that time, the news of the charge at Balaclava, in the Crimea, and, close upon it, Inkermann arrived to set every heart in England on fire. I

longed to get out, to find myself amongst those gallant glorious fellows. I went off to one of my poor Father's old military friends and comrades, who was then among the high authorities at the Horse Guards, and through his interest was appointed to the command of a troop of Bashi-Bazooks, on condition that I should be ready to start within three days by the next transport. Didn't I just jump at the offer. I rushed down to Danesbury to take leave of my Mother, who was so taken aback at my announcement that she had neither recovered her breath, nor any sort of arrangement of arguments to dissuade me from the idea, by the time I had given her my last farewell embrace and was off. But I had all my kit to prepare and no time to lose, as you may imagine. I wrote off to De Lyons, in the hopes of prevailing upon him to come out and join me as my subaltern. It would, I was sure, have suited him to a nicety; but I suppose my letter never reached him.

The roughest lot of unmitigated ruffians my men certainly were, composed not only of genuine Turks, but Greeks, Smytches from Malta, Medes, Parthians, and Arabians; the refuse and scum of every nation upon earth. My old friends of Algeria and the desert were positive swells and Pall Mall exquisites in comparison with most of them. But I managed to keep

the beggars in some sort of discipline, by personally punching some of their ugly heads for them, soundly, to begin with. Two of them I was obliged one evening to order to be shot, for an example, after an awful outbreak amongst them, and must have had it carried out, too, only was luckily saved from that disagreeable necessity, by their escaping in the night, and, of course, making themselves scarce; I saw no more of them; and deuced glad I was thus to get rid of the scoundrels.

When Sebastopol had been knocked inside out and demolished, and the war was over, and I saw everyone else—for I had fraternized and made friends with no end of fellows—many of them being old Eton chums of my own form and standing—when I saw them all, I say, so jolly as they were at the thoughts of getting home to England again, I, for a time, at least, had a qualm of home-sickness too. But it soon evaporated. I had made up my mind for a wild and wandering life, which, as I had already found in the deserts, suited me best both for bodily health and spirits; and remembering the resolution with which I had originally started, backed by the prudent advice of the Professor. So, sending home by a friend full and satisfactory tidings of myself, with a perfect cargo of trophies in the shape of dead Russians' helmets

and accoutrements, and all sorts of *curios* from the bazaars at Constantinople to my mother, I made up my mind to go down to India, and see something of those grand kingdoms of the world. If I had only carried out my intention, I should, as it happened, have just come in for the mutiny, and all the fighting and fun there — if I had only known it!

I had worked my way as far as Suez, and was on the very point of embarking to go down the Red Sea, when I happened to fall in with a first-rate fellow, one Captain McTrigger, who had just lost his companion, with whom he had planned an expedition into the innermost regions of Africa, but, unfortunately, had been prevented, by the said friend having died suddenly of a fever, or something of that sort. I accepted McTrigger's offer of filling the poor fellow's place; and taking his guns and rifles, and share of waggon, bullocks, and tents, at a fair price—indeed, I may say, a decided bargain, I changed the remainder of my ready money into glass beads, cowry shells, and coloured handkerchiefs, which pass as current coin in the realms which we proposed to visit, and within ten days from my first making up my mind to join the expedition we were well on our way for those inland countries as yet unexplored by any European.

We worked on from time to time, sometimes encamping for a week, sometimes a month, or more, in the same place, without any definite object, except hunting, or, rather, shooting, on the grandest and most varied scale, and of that, you may believe me, we got our hearts' content. It was magnificent! lions, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, and elephants. Ostriches and giraffes, we looked upon almost as small game to our bags, as one does at home upon snipe or landrail, in a highly-preserved pheasant country.

The beauty of it is, that my belief is, in the wide course of our wanderings we were in fact the first who actually found and came to the original source of the Nile, about which they have since been making such a deal of fuss, without thinking or knowing anything about it, or, what is more, even caring to have done so. All I do know is, that in our peregrinations we happened to discover a small but very deep pool—just exactly like what they call a *tarn* up in Cumberland—high up among the mountains, constantly supplied by strong springs, which we could see bubbling up with immense force in its centre. It was evidently the immediate drain of all the lofty mountains in the midst of which it was hidden, and through which it had in process of time gradually worked an outlet, by which its waters, falling over in

several small streams or cataracts, supplied a very large lake below. We never carried any charts or maps about with us, or any other impediments of civilized life of that sort; and our only guides as to our bearings or whereabouts were the stars at night. We knew just enough to be able to look out for the constellation of the Southern Cross, and that is to what we mainly trusted. The sun, on which we had naturally at first supposed that we should have to rely for our reckonings as to the direction we were taking, was no use to us, as it was always broiling right straight over the top of our heads.

By that said tarn, then, we established our head-quarters for ever so long, encamped, or rather living under the shelter of a most commodious cavern which we discovered in the side of the rock just above, and had fortified for ourselves against the attacks of wild beasts.

It was a capital place; and when we were lazy and did not care, as sometimes happened, to go on long shooting expeditions further up into the mountains, we could lie at the mouth of our hole, and quietly pot lions, hyenas, and other such game who came at nightfall to the water below us to drink.

Before I came away, I remember I was going to cut my name in large letters over the en-

trance of our cave, and the date as near as we could guess it. I wish I had, now; because we should have seen whether any of those more recent discoverers would have had the honesty to own that they had found it there. But my companion McTrigger dissuaded me: he said it was such a regular snobbish trick, leaving one's name chalked up or cut about wherever Englishmen go. And I quite agree with him that, as a general rule, it decidedly is so; but now I am very sorry that we did not make that an exception.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TRAVELLERS' TALES.

"Among the Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders."

Othello, act i. sc. 3.

We found scarcely any difficulty or danger arising from the various nations and tribes of niggers amongst whom we fell, simply by following one plain rule of social tact and policy. That was by always immediately and at once adopting the costume and manners of the people themselves; and entirely dropping any ideas or preconceived prejudices of our own, never by word or look expressing any astonishment or other emotion, on finding that their manners and notions were not always precisely the same as our own might happen to be at home.

Where we found that the skins of beasts were the fashion, we appeared at once turned out in the same, as neatly as our invaluable treasure, a negro dragoman and interpreter, and indeed factotum, whom we had picked up just as we were starting, could manage to arrange for us.

It might be only an apron of bark, or of palm tree leaves, or perhaps a graceful head-dress of ostrich feathers; it was all the same to us. If we saw it was the correct thing, we at once adopted it; and it was always accepted at the various native courts, just as it was intended, as a mark of courtesy and compliment.

Then again, as to their national customs. One noble Sovereign, who was everything that could be kind and hospitable towards us, had a fancy for keeping his hand in by cutting off the heads of three of his subjects every morning before breakfast. We, instead of expressing any impertinent horror at what after all could be no possible concern of ours, as strangers and guests of his Majesty, when asked our opinions of this playful fancy, only conveyed through an interpreter a well-turned compliment on his forbearance in not cutting off six of the rascals' heads instead of three. I was sure, by their hideous faces, that they deserved it.

Or, again, when invited at another court—but that was right the other side across the continent—to assist at a grand parade of female troops, fat to obesity and swarthy they were, and their uniforms of the scantiest description; still we felt that it was but polite to offer our own tribute of highly-flattering

admiration, as we should have done had the same special honour been paid to us by a review of the Cent-Gardes or Guides in the Champ de Mars, or the Czar's own Chevaliers de la Garde in the plains of Moscow.

I must, by the way, specially record the tact with which McTrigger, who was throughout one of the most gentlemanly men I was ever thrown with, avoided, without giving offence, partaking some stewed collops of an unfortunate missionary, who had made himself offensive to one Monarch of an inland kingdom—the King of the Ashongos I think it was, though I wont be quite sure—to whose royal table we had received the honour of an invitation.

Not, of course, having an idea what the dish was, for it is not yet the fashion to write a *ménu* in those countries, he had actually got his fork in the portion before him, when the King, at whose right hand he was sitting, recommended it particularly to his taste, at the same time informing him of the circumstances under which the unfortunate but imprudent divine had so offended, as to have been consigned to the royal larder.

McTrigger, without the slightest perceptible change of countenance, declared at once that it was *roondah* to him—that is, according to one of their native

superstitions, that that particular article of food was strictly forbidden to him and all his tribe and family—though others might eat the same with impunity, while to them, perhaps, some other kind of meat might be also *roondah*. As we had already informed his majesty that, although friends, we were not brothers or even of the same family, and therefore, of course, not likely to be amenable to the same *roondah*, I had to get off with the less satisfactory excuse of regretting much that my medical adviser had expressly forbidden my ever eating anything so rich, being unfortunately, as I was, acutely subject to dyspepsia.

We secretly secured the collop in a piece of paper, and by afterwards bribing the head cook, we obtained possession of the rest of the dish, or at least as much of it as had come down from table, besides the skull and some of the bones; which remains we buried that same evening by moonlight, and committed decently to the ground in a secluded spot behind the straw hut which had been specially allotted to us.

Poor fellow! I sincerely trust that if you do ever publish this, as you say is your intention, this may, perhaps, meet the eye, and prove a source of consolation to his sorrowing relatives.

But talking of publishing, I must cut these re-

miniscences of my travels and adventures short, or I fear that I shall not be acting quite fairly by the respectable firm with whom McTrigger and I have already entered into an agreement for the copyright of "From Tropic to Tropic; or, Letters from the Interior of Africa;" though deuce a letter had either of us ever written, nor one line of diary or memorandum had we to show between us, for the very simple reason that it had never occurred to either of us to take any stationery—either paper, sketch-book, pen, ink, or pencil, or anything of the sort in our stores. But that did not seem to matter much—those fellows who provide books for the reading public are such wonderfully clever geniuses, you know. I am sure they well deserve all the money they make.

Within a week of our return to England, one of their clerks, compositors, or whatever these gentlemen call themselves, had waited upon us with a handsome offer for any manuscripts, sketches, or notes which we may have brought home with us.

It was then for the first time that the idea even of such a thing entered our heads; though we had some difficulty in persuading the literary man that such was really the fact, and that our sole object in making the expedition had been for sport, and because the wild life suited our fancies.

But as I say, he was a clever fellow, and not to be put off his project by trifles. So he set to work with a big atlas and a compendium of geography, and in a very few days had, with the most marvellous talent, produced a regular skeleton work, with a proper introduction, and whole chapters of interesting statistics, geological observations, refutations of the assertions of other travellers, and personal adventures, all complete. These he trusted to us to fill out, as upon reading out some of the names which we found in the latest published map, various reminiscences were suggested to our minds. It was quite wonderful how easily he strung them all together, as, sitting over our cigars, we told him some of our old stories. He would even, as we let him have them, touch them up, and sometimes swell them out with such outrageous exaggerations and aberrations from fact, that though we were prepared to allow him a considerable margin, we could not quite endorse some of the extraordinary *bangers* he would have tried to have imposed upon the enlightened British public.

McTrigger used to stretch a trifle occasionally, which I, as his friend and fellow traveller, did not think fair to correct, but his stretchers would have been doubled and trebled over and over again by our

literary friend's lively imagination, if we had allowed it its full scope on all occasions.

I certainly look forward to reading the three volumes, post octavo, when they appear, as they now shortly will, with the most lively interest; for from what I could judge from some sheets of the manuscript which he let me look over, the greater part of their contents will be quite as new and startling to myself as to the rest of the world.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE "GULPER."

It would never do, you know, to infringe upon other persons' rights by allowing you in the same way as I have described of our publisher's agent to get hold of the materials for cooking up the same travels and adventures in another form. So I shall tell you no more details, excepting one of the most curious things of all which happened to us; but which wont matter, because, though it is perfectly true, and to my mind one of the best of the incidents, let alone jokes, in the whole of our expedition, that talented individual, however, felt obliged to pass it over and leave it entirely out; because, as he explained to me very fairly, it happens to clash most unfortunately with the works of another African traveller which had also not long before been published by his employer's firm, towards whom he therefore thought it would not be acting rightly.

It was about the end of the second, or may be the

third year of our wanderings—I cannot, as I have told you, pretend to be precise about time within ten or twelve months, or so ;—but Mc Trigger and I had been working diagonally across the very centre of the continent, pretty near, as well as we could judge, in a slantindicular direction athwart the line of the equator. We had long since left off almost all but a bare apology for clothes; all those we had started with had worn out and disappeared; but having adopted the native costume of a rather scanty kilt or tunic made of the skins of beasts, our own hides had in the meanwhile become tanned as black, and nearly as hard as leather. McTrigger was covered all over from head to foot with hair as thick and long as a Shetland pony, as I used to tell him; and he always returned the compliment, so I suppose I was much the same in appearance, though not being encumbered with a looking-glass, I had no means of judging. Any pretence even of washing, I am almost ashamed to own, we had given up for months before ; for water was scarce, and had to be carried with us for weeks together in our drays, and sometimes on the backs of our niggers. Our supply was running short, and having made two or three days' forced marches—for we were in the further predicament of having exhausted all our powder, and consequently

reduced to living upon what fruit, vegetables, and sometimes even roots we could find, and instead of hunting for game, were trying to find water—when forcing our way through some frightfully thick scrub, to our great and immense astonishment, we all of a sudden found ourselves close upon an encampment of white men, or at least one white man we distinctly saw amongst them.

McTrigger, I must tell you, had as his own particular pet body servant a nigger boy, whom we used to call "The Gulper" (from a peculiar physical tendency he had in his throat). The Gulper was a parting present from his majesty the King of the Shillouks, a tribe inhabiting the southern part of Nubia. The poor little beggar's tongue had been cut out when a child, but he was as sharp and active as a monkey, and just as full of tricks and mischief. He was a great favourite with us both, though we used to have to thrash him on an average of at least three times a day, which was necessary to keep him in any sort of order. Gulper had not long before the incident I am now going to tell you fallen in with, and to our most intense interest had a regular stand-up fight with a great ourang-outang half as big again as himself, and having vanquished and slain his foe, he within a few days contrived entirely to extract the flesh and bones

piecemeal, for all the world like the inside of a roasted potato; and having thus completely cleaned out the brute's skin, ingeniously fitted himself into it, as into a garment.

In this fancy costume the "Gulper," when in a particularly facetious humour, used occasionally to perform a sort of pantomime for our amusement, indulging in all kinds of antics and absurdities. He also found it extremely efficacious when pushing through the thorns and thickets of the scrub, which he used to do, pioneering a way for us with most marvellous pluck and dexterity.

He was as usual leading the way in his favourite costume when, as I was going to tell you, we came so suddenly, and unexpectedly, upon the opposition encampment of another European traveller.

Gulper, with a wild scream of delight at the sight, jumped into the midst of them, and was making a hideous grimace, which had cost McTrigger no little trouble in instructing him as a reminiscence of the once famous clown, Joe Grimaldi. The whole circle had sprung up in amazement at this apparition, as well they might. In another instant, without even time for an exclamation, the man who seemed to be the leader amongst them had his rifle to his cheek, with its muzzle within two feet of poor Gulper's

head. McTrigger rushed forward, seized hold of the barrel, and after a very slight tussle wrested it from the fellow's grasp, and, by way of a lesson for his rash hastiness, caught his antagonist a smartish tap on the top of his head with the stock of his own rifle, immediately counteracting the effect of the same with a well-applied kick in an opposite direction, as he turned and fled with a howl of terror; in which example he was followed by the whole "boiling" of his companions and followers, who dispersed in every direction, without one of them stopping even to look behind him.

The whole thing passed in less than the twinkle of an eye—so quickly, indeed, that on neither side had we found time to utter a word. From the half inarticulate exclamation of the Leader, as he took to his heels, we fancied he must be a Frenchman, but were not sure. After in vain shouting to them to stop, we enjoyed a most hearty laugh at the absurdity of the adventure; and then, finding that they did not seem inclined to return, we sat down in their places and, ravenously hungry as we were, did full justice to some excellent wild-pork soup which we found boiling in their pot. It was, I own, not perhaps strictly honest; but if you had been, as we were, hard put to it for food and drink, I am sure that you,

or any one else in our place, would have done the same. Hunger, like necessity, has no law; but hunger hardly expresses what the niggers themselves call "*gouamba*"—it is, indeed, the most intense craving for animal food, amounting almost to absolute torment; and the *cassava*, and those villanous wild sweet potatoes, which was all we had been living upon for ever so many days—ever since, in fact, we had come to the end of our ammunition—though it may partially have appeased our appetites at the time, certainly only tended to increase the same awful craving again later. After we had thus regaled ourselves, we really did our best to follow and come up with the strangers; but though we beat the country all round for some considerable distance, until late that evening, not one of them could we find.

In the meantime, I am sorry to have to tell that the "Gulper" and our other niggers—who, taken all together, were the most faithful and honest of retainers to ourselves, their lawful masters—having but undefined ideas as to the rights of *meum* and *tuum* in regard to the rest of mankind, had helped themselves largely to the contents of the well-stored but deserted waggons. Ammunition, provisions, and other spoils we found carefully conveyed, and ostentatiously displayed as trophies in front of our tent,

when we returned to it that night; and great was the amazement of our suite, and not slight their indignation as far as they dared show it, when we thrashed them all round severely for their pains.

Our head-quarters were at that time some five or six miles from where we had thus unexpectedly lighted on these strangers. We agreed that the best way would be to allow them two or three days' quiet to recover themselves, and then, having pretty accurately marked their whereabouts, send them a message of amity and apology, with a full restitution of, or at least offer of compensation for, our followers' maraudings. It was on the third morning, accordingly, that our oldest and steadiest negro, who had picked up a considerable smattering of English, accompanied by the unfortunate (as he proved to be) "Gulper," as more talented in finding his way through the dense thickets, was despatched as an ambassador of peace.

We absolutely forbade them to carry their spears or arrows, but Tatoe-top, which was what we had named our majordomo, from the peculiar form of his head, would insist upon arraying himself like the Gulper (whose costume, as I have described it, was the object of the most intense envy to the whole of his fellows), in the skin of a large baboon which I had shot some time since, with the bristly mane of a wild boar,

another trophy of the chase, thrown gracefully over his head. They were particularly charged to be most respectful in their demeanour, and the Gulper more especially, to refrain from any sort of Grimaldian postures or grimaces. Alas, poor Gulper! it was a fatal expedition for him.

Tatoe-top returned to us after two days' absence in a grievous condition, himself wounded, having been shot, though not seriously, through what ought to have been the calf of his leg, only niggers, as you of course know, never have calves. Before they had expected to do so, they had fallen in with the caravan, which had reassembled again, as we thought they would. Immediately upon emerging from the thicket, they had approached with salaams and signs of respectful salutation, such as we had taken some pains to teach and make them thoroughly rehearse before they started; but no sooner had the strangers perceived them than they again scampered off in all directions, except one white man, who, stepping behind a big tree and taking deliberate aim, had shot poor Gulper through the head; at seeing which catastrophe Tatoe-top naturally turned and made a rush for the scrub, but had received, what must have been a very long shot, from another more distant rifle before he had effected his escape.

I myself was perfectly furious at first, and was for at once declaring a war of vengeance and extermination against these reckless cowards, as they evidently must have been. But my companion, who was a cooler-headed fellow—the coolest and bravest fellow in real danger, I certainly ever saw in my life—took, what I must now own to be, a more sensible view of the matter. He pointed out that a blood-thirsty retaliation, without explanation, as it would probably be, would be but a poor satisfaction after all, and might lead us into all kinds of trouble, and perhaps no end of remorse hereafter. He was a very strongly conscientious fellow was Ralph McTrigger. He was quite as sorry and indignant about poor Gulper, who was indeed his own particular property, as I was, but he argued very justly that killing a couple, or a dozen maybe, white men or black, wouldn't bring him to life again. That naturally riled at having their waggon pillaged, as they of course supposed, by wild savages out of the scrub, and then supposing, as they very well might, that they were coming again on the same errand, they had only acted as we ourselves should have done under the same circumstances, and indeed had been obliged to do, some time before, by way of example for marauders. And so he talked the words

of wisdom, which I received into the ears of understanding.

But under the circumstances we did not care to fraternize with the parties, and though we really had had the best and most honest intentions, now felt less compunction about keeping their stores, of which, as I have told you, we were in much want. And so we let them pass us quietly within a very short distance, without their probably having an idea of our being so near them. We heard their continual shots one whole day, but we let them alone.

Not so, however, our followers, who got away from us at night. Luckily for those fellows, it was always our custom to have all the arms deposited for security in our own tent every evening; but they so frightened and bewildered them by their wild shrieks and cries, and all sorts of strange noises all round them, from the tops of trees, and depths of brushwood, that they fairly drove them for miles out of their track, and indeed that part of the country, so that we heard or saw no more of them.

Since my return to England, I have been given to understand that the ourang-outang skin of poor Gulper has been exhibited, and is, I believe, now to be seen, artistically stuffed in a museum, having

been brought to England as a trophy of the prowess and bravery of the traveller—I never can remember the fellow's name, whose account I have no doubt, for I have never yet had time to read it, differs somewhat in details from mine, which all the same is the true one. So much then for my tropical adventures! If you want to know the fuller particulars, you must, as I tell you, buy the volumes as soon as they come out, and having paid your money, take in just as much as you like, and no more, for gospel. Suffice it to say, that McTrigger and myself abstained from all wilful lies, though we cannot be responsible for the imagination and embellishments of the publisher's agent. But what cannot be disputed is, that it must have been our own fault, if we did not see something of these unknown territories, and kingdoms, and empires, of which I had never heard the name before; for we certainly traversed the whole lot of them—going in at the extreme north-east of the continent, we eventually came out again, one fine day, at the extreme south-western point, almost down at the Cape itself.

There making a stay of some weeks, in course of time we resumed the manners and customs of civilization, in regard to washing and combing ourselves; and, after undergoing a regular course of clipping and singeing, once more enclothed our limbs

in the recognised fashions of Christians—shooting-jackets and overcoats—having passed just three years and nine months, as a comparison of calendars proved it to be, though it did not seem to me like more than half that time to look back upon, in our wanderings among the heathen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Art is long, and time is fleeting."—LONGFELLOW.

IT was in the spring of 1860 that we set out from Cape Town, where we had been most hospitably treated by the settlers and officers of the regiments quartered in those lively diggings; and working our way in traders across to Madagascar, and then up along the eastern coast of the continent, came up the Red Sea, and across by the regular overland route from Suez.

As with the former companion of my sojourning in Africa, so was it again at Malta, that McTrigger and I parted in real sorrow; thrown together as we had been so entirely, as we had not managed on any single occasion to quarrel, we were of course become like two brothers in our affection and regard for one another. But he was obliged to come on to England to take some regimental appointment, which the interest of his friends had procured for him, while I found myself once more in Italy.

On board the P. and O. steamer, which brought

us from Alexandria, I happened to fall in with an old Indian civilian, a judge, or a commissioner, or common councilman, or whatever those fellows are, coming home on three years' leave, with a dilapidated liver, and an enthusiastic devotion to the fine arts.

My new friend's name was Wrott, which he was very fiercely particular about having always correctly spelt with its W and two T's. Besides that pardonable weakness, his one sole idea was painting, though how he really could enjoy and appreciate the beauties of the colouring, and blended harmony, and contrasts of the *chiaro-oscuro*, in the grand works of art, as he professed to do, used somewhat to puzzle me, considering that he had, in moments of confidence, more than once lamented to me, that from the hopeless derangement of his digestive organs in the service of an ungrateful country, or rather Honourable Company, everything in the earth, air, or sea around him appeared to his eyes of the same rich golden hue, even yellow as the yolks of eggs.

I think I never met any one who was, theoretically, so well up in the subject; and naturally fond as I had always been of the arts, I felt sensibly improved, and refined in my own tastes, while my knowledge and judgment were proportionately cultivated under such excellent guidance.

He always carried about with him a perfect library of handbooks, dictionaries, and every sort of standard work ever published upon art, all of which he informed me he had read through and through, over and again, while left to his own resources in the secluded retirement of Hundy-Bundy Bangdoor, which was, so far as I could make out, the post town of his Indian residence, until he knew every page of them all by heart, and was now enjoying to the full, the fruits of his study and acquired information.

We visited—"did," that is the correct enthusiastic traveller's term—not only the principal galleries and collections of Naples, Rome, Florence, and the other great capitals and cities, but all the out-of-the-way places where there were any fine frescoes or paintings to be seen, such as Orvieto, Assisi, Foligno; and then all the northern part, through Bologna, Ferrara, Padua, and Venice, where, by the way, I nearly most ungratefully repaid poor old Wrott for all the pains and patience he had shown in making a first-rate connoisseur of me, as, though I have to say so, that shouldn't, I now conscientiously feel myself to be. In return for which I upset the poor old fellow out of a gondola, and as near as a toucher drowned him in the Adriatic, half way across to the Lido, by unfortunately "catching a crab" while taking

my first lesson in the style of rowing peculiar to that country from our "graceful gondolier."

I had only returned to England about five or six months when I met you as I did in the grand stand on the Derby day, for I had been in no particular hurry as long as I was jolly, and time passed happily from day to day in the way it was doing.

I had come of age—that is, was thirty-two the previous autumn;—but finding the accumulation of my allowance, which all the time I had been in Africa I had needed to take very little from, quite sufficient for all my wants, I had written to my man of business to see after my concerns, and take all the necessary steps for establishing me properly in my rights. I was dodging about from one place to another, so that letters miscarried, or from one cause or another, it was some months before I received an intimation that I had better come home at once, as there seemed some danger of a very troublesome hitch arising in my affairs.

I knew how apt those lawyer fellows often are to make a fuss about trifles, in order to display their own cleverness and energy in the interests of their clients, so that even when in due course of time those threatening intimations did reach me, I did not think much of them, but had so far allowed them to influence me as

to decide me in leisurely working my way homewards. I had arrived accordingly in Paris, where I happened to take up an old copy of the *Times*, in the second column of which, to my great surprise, my eye was caught by my own name in full, Francis Pelham Lambard, advertised in the plainest type.

LAST heard of by his sorrowing friends in 1856, as then serving in the Turkish Contingent before Sebastopol. Any person giving information as to the present address of the above gentleman, if still alive, or bringing satisfactory and legal evidence of the decease of the same F. P. Lambard, shall be handsomely rewarded for his trouble. Letters to be addressed to M. G., care of Messrs. McKraft and Wrascall, late Wyley, McKraft, and Co., Sharper's Row, W.C., London.

Wyley and McKraft had, I knew, split partnership some months since, and were now sworn enemies. I gave some credit to the former, who had been for the last few months in tolerably constant correspondence with myself, for his honesty in not coming down upon his former partners, or rather the mysterious M. G., for the handsome reward forthwith.

But as I have found out since it was upon my own individual affairs that the actual quarrel had arisen and the firm broken up, and that old Wyley, upon the appearance of that advertisement, had taken the trouble to go down personally to my Mother, to warn and

impress upon her on no account to give any information to anybody, as to where I was, or what I had been about, and even to be careful not to allow her own servants to gain a clue, which might be a temptation to them, by sending them to post any letters addressed to me abroad.

Of course you guess who the M. G. was who was taking this lively interest in my fate, dead or alive. Who but Melchior Gorles himself again? though, strange to say, the real truth did not occur to me so immediately as you would probably imagine. I had been so long away, and out of the reach, as I suppose, of the cycle of his influence, that I had almost left off thinking, or certainly worrying my mind as I had formerly done, about the little wretch. I had entirely forgotten that, having married my nearest of kin, the only daughter of my poor father's first cousin, in case of my dying unmarried or without children, his wife was in fact my heiress-at-law. That was the simple explanation with which old Wyley put me off, though I could see all the while by his shuffling manner that he was still keeping back something more important; for stirred up as I had been by seeing myself thus put in the "Hue and Cry," I had come over with a "whisko," and, within less than twenty hours of

taking up that paper, had found myself in old Wyley's new offices in Sutor's Inn.

My lawyer advised me to go down home to Hertfordshire, and at once assume all rights and possession of the property which I had come into by my grandfather's will, adding that it would be time enough to begin to bother myself about the "hitch," when it should arise, as probably none ever would; and which in fact he now declared that he had only alluded to, in order to bring me home to look after my own place and property as I ought to do.

I did not half believe the cunning old fox, as I say, while thus trying to throw me off the scent, but I could get nothing more out of him. As Gorles' name had been mentioned, by-the-bye, he cautioned me to be wary of him, and to keep as much as I could out of his way; indeed, the less I had to do with any of the firm—he alluded to his late partners—perhaps the better.

I did not need this advice in regard to Master Gorles, as you may imagine; but in spite of my hatred and determined avoidance of him, his baneful influence again began to circumvent and pursue my path. Having established myself in my new home, Kraxted Manor as it is called, and remaining there some six or

seven weeks, I began to find it rather dull. I knew none of the neighbours; most of them, indeed, just as I first went down there, had moved up to London upon the opening of Parliament. The shooting was over, even if every head of game had not, as I found, been killed down.

Messrs. McKraft and Wrascall, on the strength of being my agents, before their partnership had been dissolved, had actually had the impudence to go down occasionally for a day in my preserves, and had even added to the insult by having sometimes taken Gorles with them, who, the old keeper informed me, had given himself no end of airs; ordering the beaters and people about, and even more than intimating that he might probably before long come to live there as master and owner of the property.

The first mischief Gorles did me upon my return to town, was to get me black-balled for the Loungers, a club I was particularly anxious to get into, and for which McTrigger, when he returned to England the year before myself, had put down my name. I had lots of old school and college friends amongst the members, besides its having been my poor Father's club, so there were many of his old comrades who would have given me a welcome for his sake.

It is the custom at the Loungers for any number of personal friends of a candidate to back his election by subscribing their names beneath those of the actual proposer and seconder in the book. Gorles, who had by some means been admitted to that club, happening, as ill-luck would have it, to see my name up as a candidate, must needs wind up a tolerably long list of my personal friends by his own signature in gigantic type. It was a great pity that McTrigger did not at once withdraw my name, as the fate of any one supposed to be a friend of Gorles was a certainty.

He was very shortly afterwards himself expelled for throwing a bottle of ink in the face of one of the waiters who had offended him. It was just like my luck, my destiny, my fate, or whatever you like to call it, when, having been elected into the Marlborough, upon my first entrance I took up one of the lists of members, and amongst them found Gorles' name there also.

That is the club, in the Derby lottery of which I had happened to have drawn the winning horse. Though not one of the most fashionable, it has more than perhaps its proportion of City swells in it, fond of a snack of racing and sport, and with lots of money to spare.

I went there but very seldom, and never, as it happened, once ran against my *bête noir*, even when I did so, though that did not prevent him serving me another evil turn, again in the usual indirect manner, as of old.

I had run down out of town for three or four days, when I received by one morning's post, the pleasing intimation that the house in which I lodged had been burnt down to the ground, by which I lost all my clothes and effects, including no end of trophies, *curios*, pictures, and all manner of different things which I had collected in my various travels, and would not willingly have parted with for the world. "The fire had originated," as I derived some slight interest in learning from the next day's *Times*, "in a small house which communicated at the back, occupied by a gentleman of the name of Gorles, who fortunately," as the report went on to say, "had insured, only a few weeks previously, the whole of his furniture and other valuables, which he had collected and arranged at the greatest cost and trouble, but which had all been entirely destroyed by the fire." I, not having had the same fortunate prudence and foresight, of course lost everything. Gorles had done me the honour to call and leave, as I suppose I was to take

it, a card of condolence; but I had never set eyes upon him until that day that we ourselves met, and when you saw him come up to buy the lottery-ticket from me in the Grand Stand at Epsom on the Derby day.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

POPE.

I HAVE already mentioned, that although Frank Lambard gave me the general outline of these adventures of his early life, upon that summer's night that he first yielded to his inclination of unbosoming himself to me; yet it must not of course be supposed that I at that time, or indeed until many weeks and months afterwards, learnt all the details which I have been able to set forth at such length, in these many pages—many more than I ever had the slightest idea of filling when first I entered upon the undertaking of compiling and arranging, in the best form and order that I could, all that my friend would come and tell me, sometimes by the hour together. From the text of this narrative itself may perhaps be gathered, how some of his reminiscences would at one time rouse him to the most boisterous spirits, or again depress them to an opposite state of almost maudlin sentimentality; one day charging me to

treat his communications with the strictest confidence, the next he would come bouncing in upon me, to tell the same story over again with many and various alterations and additions, which had in the meantime occurred to him, insisting upon my instantly offering them to some particular magazine or periodical to which he might have taken a fancy, and declaring that we should make a fortune in no time, and take our places together among the literary lions of the day.

That notion certainly pleased and increased upon him, as from time to time we went on with the work, though, to tell the truth, rather discouraged than not by myself, for more good reasons than one. Finally it was agreed between us that the whole narrative, arranged and blended together as I had had it from him, at different times, and in different humours, though occasionally slightly modified at my suggestion, should be prepared under Frank's own immediate superintendence, so as to be kept ready for publication, should there at any time arise a need for the vindication of his own character; or from any other circumstances it might ever happen that the world at large should think it worth while to take any interest in his private affairs.

"Who knows but that such may be the case some day?" he said.

How often have those words since recurred to me! spoken as they were at the time more in joke than with any sort of definite idea attached to them; and if, as he has since declared to me, and I really believe in all truth, he had no more idea of what was impending over him at that time than myself, the presentiment which suggested that remark, or as he himself afterwards chose to define it, the fore-knowledge of the spirit, as distinct from that of the mind, was certainly very remarkable.

Frank Lambard and I had thus become fast friends, so much so that while in London he had taken up his abode in chambers under the same roof as myself, and though our out-door pursuits and diversions did not entirely assimilate, much of our days, and almost always our evenings, were passed in each other's company.

Sometimes, as I have said, he would be in the highest possible good spirits, seeming thoroughly to enjoy every sort of pleasure and amusement which his comfortable means allowed him perfectly to indulge in: there were times when, as the saying is, there was really no holding him; but then again, as is not

unusual with extreme temperaments like his, a reaction would take place, and becoming low-spirited and downright melancholy from no apparent cause, he would shun all society, and shutting himself up, declare half-solemnly, and half-mockingly, while apologizing for himself, that the black spirit of Melchior Gorles, his enemy, was overshadowing him.

CHAPTER XXX.

A CRAFTY INQUIRY.

It was, I suppose, about a year after I had been thus so constantly thrown with him, that having been for some weeks away in the country, I had not seen or heard anything of my friend during that time; when upon the second morning after my return to town, I received a visit from a gentleman, who sent up his card with a message most particularly desiring to see me,

MR. MCKRAFT,

SOLICITOR.

—a sleek and oily gentleman, whose name I, of course, immediately recognised; but not having my notes or papers handy, I very stupidly could not, upon the spur of the moment, call to mind whether he was the partner of the firm in Sharper's Row, who had remained as the legal adviser and friend of Frank Lambard, or not. My visitor seemed inclined to lose a good deal of his own, as well as my time, by beating about the bush, until I brought him at once to the point by asking him plainly whether it

was on Mr. Lambard's affairs, or what, that he wished to see me.

He seemed slightly taken aback at my abruptness; and then, with a little more palaver about having heard much of me as one of that gentleman's most intimate friends, or something of that sort, said that he had ventured to come to inquire, in the strictest confidence, whether, in the course of our intimacy, any doubts had ever occurred to my mind as to the mental health—in fact,—after a little more hesitation,—the perfect sanity—of Mr. Lambard at all times.

I was staggered, for until that moment no doubt on the subject had certainly ever once occurred to me, and to that effect I gave a most decided answer.

The slimy man of law seemed rather disappointed and surprised at the promptness and unhesitating firmness of my opinion on the point; and after a pause of consideration, he proceeded in a tone of artfully assumed solemnity, to put the case thus to me.

"Well, sir, you, of course, have had great opportunity for forming so decided a judgment; but should you be prepared, or, let us say, conscientiously obliged, to swear that such is your firm belief, supposing your friend to have been guilty of some great crime; manslaughter, or even perhaps a murder, for instance,

between which two names for what may be but one and the same fact, after all, a plea of insanity sometimes makes all the difference"——

"Good heavens! do you mean to say he has killed him then," I exclaimed. "Well, I have, I own, sometimes almost expected it to come to that! I am sure I have seen poor Frank work himself into such a state of mind, when thinking or telling of that little fiend Gorles's strange influence over him, that I feel I could, with a clear conscience, swear that in that respect he would not be responsible for his own actions."

"Thank you, sir; that will do," said Mr. McKraft; "and such evidence, having been given as it is, be forehand and unbiassed, will be of use, no doubt, to your friend, should such a catastrophe, which happily, I only put as a supposititious instance, ever occur. Good morning, sir. Thank you."

And he was off before I could recover my self-possession at his slimy impertinence. I called after him for some further explanation, but in vain.

I naturally wrote off the same day to Lambard himself, and begged him to let me know what it all might mean, and what new scrape or adventure he had been lately engaged in, which would require so very desperate a line of defence as that hinted at by the

attorney, of my interview with whom I plainly gave him all the full particulars.

His answer, which (a most unusual thing from him) came by return of post, showed that he was under one of his melancholy fits. The latter part of it, however, alluded rather briefly to the subject of my earnest inquiries.

"I have, "he wrote, "only within the last few weeks learnt what has so long been the object of mingled curiosity and doubt to me — the real conditions of my Grandfather's strange, and, as I call it, most unwarrantable will. You and all the world besides will, before long, know it too, and nobody will, I am sure, wonder at the effect that it has had upon me. The cloud which I have somehow long felt hanging over me has burst at last, and from the quarter that the bitter experience of my whole past life might make me almost, as a matter of course, naturally look for and expect it. I am, it seems, after all, to be dispossessed of my property. My tenants have already received official notice to withhold their rents ; and I have myself been served with a formal writ, the purport of which is, as far as I can make it out, to explain to me, in the politest, though at the same time most explicit, manner, that I am not the lawful possessor of Kraxted Manor ; and,

therefore, coolly demanding that I may appear, and be ready to deliver it up with all its messuages, tenements, and other appurtenances, within a period of sixteen days from having received this pleasant communication.

"I have declined this very polite invitation, as you may well imagine. The consequence is, that I am cited to appear before her Majesty's judges as early as the case can be brought on in the term, which commences in a day or two.

"My hands and head are full enough of business and anxiety, in consequence, as you may well imagine; therefore, no more at present, but wait till I see you, and I will tell thee all.

"Believe me,

"Yours ever, most sincerely,

"FRANK P. LAMBARD."

CHAPTER XXXI.

GORLES *versus* LAMBARD.

"If this be madness, yet there's method in it."
Hamlet.

As I have throughout endeavoured to keep myself as an humble individual entirely in the background, I need not more than very shortly allude to the part which I was obliged to take, having been subpœnaed, as I was, amongst some fifty or sixty other witnesses, in that famous ejectment case with which, about two years since, the whole country was ringing. Who does not still remember the unparalleled mass of evidence to which whole columns of the daily papers were for a month entirely devoted? Perhaps the best summary of the whole of that remarkable trial was, as I have always thought, given in an article which appeared in the *Piccadilly Magazine* of the following month, and which I now, without having asked the permission of the editor, have taken the liberty of transcribing nearly at full length:—

Assuredly, in these spirit-rapping days, the ghosts of poor old John Doe, and Richard Roe, now at last, by

a comparatively recent act of Parliament deceased, must, we should imagine, have felt their indignation roused, and have been inclined to rap any amount of remonstrances through any respectable medium who would have been good enough to convey their well-founded complaints, at hearing of—as who has not? —the late famous ejectment case, "Gorles *versus* Lambard," merged and dissolved, as it were, into what has turned out to be neither more nor less than a sort of double *de lunatico* inquiry, one within the other, most irregularly tried in a wrong court.

Francis Lambard, Esq., of Kraxted Manor, is a gentleman whose birth and position, as proved by disinterested witnesses (whose expenses have, we sincerely trust, been paid strictly according to the value of their testimony), would seem to entitle him to a place of consideration amongst our landed gentry. Besides a conditional interest in the said Kraxted estates, which were the actual bone of contention in this *cause célèbre*, he inherited from his Grandfather a more questionable, though, in some extreme cases, not always to be despised legacy, in the shape of what is commonly called "hereditary madness," which, with the eccentricity which is so often found in that malady, had been accustomed to reappear for some generations back in every alternate step of the family pedigree.

These two separate inheritances were coupled together, or rather were left to act inversely upon one another, in this wise.

The old gentleman, who seems to have had a considerable landed property entirely in his own power, left a most extraordinary will, by which, skipping over the head of his own eldest son, the late General Lambard, whose melancholy death from a railway accident some years ago in France may still be remembered, left everything to his grandson, Francis Lambard, the defendant in the late case, on two conditions: the first being that his grandson was to wait till the age of thirty-two, during which minority he must never have shown the slightest symptoms of the hereditary insanity. The other proviso, which seems not inconsistent with giving a better chance of the fulfilment of the first, was to the effect that the young man should never know what were the real conditions under which he was in due time to succeed. In the event of the non-fulfilment of the same, the said property was to pass on to a cousin, a lady, whose husband, one Mr. Gorles, has come forward as plaintiff, laying claim to the said estate on behalf of his wife, upon the plea of the non-fulfilment of the said conditions. The whole point of the trial, therefore, seemed to turn,

from the first, upon the sanity, or insanity, of the gentleman in possession; for it seems that he certainly so far proved his sound sense by coming over very quietly from abroad as soon as he had arrived at the stipulated age, and without troubling himself about the other mysterious conditions (a command over his feelings of natural curiosity which to us certainly appears almost incredible), established himself as master of his ancestral property, and, as we may add, of the position.

Not the least strange phase in this very extraordinary trial has been that the evidence of most of the witnesses who were called on the part of the plaintiff, as a rule, tended to strengthen the cause of the defendant; whilst, *vice versâ*, those of the defendant seemed, in spite of themselves, to prove the allegations of the plaintiff. This was most especially so in the case of one young gentleman, whose positive assertions as to the talents and undoubted sanity of the defendant, were only equalled by the flippancy of his replies under cross-examination, and his astounding revelations as to some of the evident delusions and private opinions of his dearest friend.

The strange variety of witnesses—and a formidable list they were, too—who passed in succession through that box, were really more like a medley taken hap-

hazard from some masquerade, than anything else to which we can compare it: beginning with a resuscitated old nurse, who had been cruelly dragged forth from her almshouse, they brought the governess of the defendant's—we were nearly saying victim's—earliest childhood; his Tutor, and old schoolfellows at Eton, many of whom, as it appeared, had never even met him, since he was a boy at that venerable institution—at which, by-the-bye, he was said to have held in his day, for some time, the high and enviable position of Captain of the Boats. Then were there not collected from all parts of Europe, at what cost and expense we positively shudder even to think, German students trampling close upon the heels, to say nothing of the feelings, of Cambridge dons; landladies, and *lacqueys de place* from Dresden; Italian doctors of European reputation; *sœurs de charité*, and *commissaires de police* from France; and enterprising ladies and gentlemen who had met the young man at Rome, and had a sensation scene to record, as having taken place at some public *table d'hôte* at Rome?

It was about that stage of the proceedings that a most pertinacious old lady insisted upon edging in her testimony, and commencing with an explanation of why, how, and when, she had contrived to exchange her former name of Blobb for the certainly more

euphonious one of De Lorme, went on to offer the most useless hearsay evidence; and in the course of cross-examination was even brought to confess that she had never even seen Mr. Lambard in her life, except once—and then without knowing who he was, in a railway carriage—though she felt sure that she could tell more about him than most people, even though they may have happened to see him more frequently. Persisting as she did in continuing her tale in defiance of the whole Bench and Bar combined, she was politely conducted to the door by the usher, where, as we have been informed, she still continued the thread of her discourse from the steps of the Court to a select audience in Westminster Hall.

Then there were officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, of the Queen's army, as well as from that romantic body of warriors of whom a few years since we used to hear so much, the Bashi Bazooks, and other wild sons of the desert; Abyssinian interpreters; African travellers and intrepid lion-slayers; settlers, brought expressly from the Cape of Good Hope; and an Indian judge, who testified enthusiastically to the refined taste and connoisseurship of one whom he himself evidently looked upon with pride, as his pupil in the love of the fine arts, and therefore untainted by the slightest suspicion as to his sanity.

We are able fully to appreciate this learned gentleman's sentiments, though not perhaps so certain that experience will quite endorse his argument. Last then, though not least, in this strange assembly of witnesses, stood forth one, who, as far as we could gather from his own account of himself, was a repentant German rationalist, a Professor in more than one of the famous continental Universities, who having dipped deeply into many of the occult sciences, including mesmerism, magnetism, with a strong dash of what seemed like necromancy itself, had turned from the error of his ways, thrown his books and his parchments in the fire, and was now seeking his peace with Heaven, having joined a society of Protestant monks lately established in the city of Norwich. He actually appeared in the witness-box of the Court at Westminster in his newly-adopted costume, with sackcloth garment, sandalled feet, and shaven head, of the regular ecclesiastical, or as we in this country are more accustomed to associate the ideas, conventional stage monk. Besides all these, there were, of course, the usual pack of doctors, surgeons, and chemists, all volunteering contradictory evidence, with no other object in view than widely advertising their own vast talents and experience, at the expense of whichever side should finally have

the honour adjudged to it of paying the costs of this astounding trial. Having kept up this interesting investigation for twenty-four consecutive days, at a cost of how many hundreds, or perhaps, even thousands a day, we dare not even try to compute, it then, for the first time, seems to have occurred to some of the eminent counsel employed, and even then only upon the suggestion of the alleged lunatic himself, whether a doubt might not have been raised as to the sanity of old Mr. Lambard himself, the original, in more senses than one, framer of this eccentric testament.

Thus commenced what might be distinguished, as the third volume of this romance in real life, in the shape of a post-mortem *de lunatico inquisitio*, in some respects analogous to a movement of the "previous question" in Parliament. That this plea should not have been originally set up on the part of the defendant, which seems almost incredible, can only be explained by the strange concatenation of facts brought out in the course of cross-examination; first, that the said defendant himself had been, as one can well understand, brought up from his cradle in the most carefully watched ignorance of the fatal curse hanging over his family. That he had never been allowed to hear even of the existence of his grandfather; that

he had no idea where, or how he had lived, or when he had died. Secondly, that when he did at last learn something of his future prospects, the only part of the condition he was allowed to know was, that everything would be immediately forfeited by any movement or attempt on his part to inquire into what it was obviously intended that he was not to know, until he had arrived at a certain time of life; in abiding by which, if not an absolute proof of sanity, he certainly exhibited a degree of trustful patience and common-sense of no ordinary quality.

But what could his attorneys and his counsel have been about?

It must be borne in mind that Messrs. Wiley and McKraft, now singularly enough the rival attorneys in this great case, were in former days partners in business, and it was in that respectable house that that will must have been originally drawn for the old gentleman, who had all his life been a client of theirs. But with a wholesome fear of legal damages for defamation before our eyes, we feel that we are treading upon delicate ground, and so hastening back to our original narrative, have only to record that three very straightforward witnesses were, upon the very sensible suggestion of the defendant himself, found without much difficulty, though they had never been even

thought of by either side, upon whose simple evidence it was most satisfactorily proved that although the old gentleman had never up to the last been actually shut up, or officially declared to be a lunatic, he had for the last twenty years of his life—a period which ran back far anterior to the date of the said will—entirely dropped all communication with any of his relations: his own son, the late General, although in command of a regiment, he persisted in declaring to be mad, and had more than once commenced measures for putting him under restraint. Nothing would induce him to go near his own property, Kraxted Manor, though he refused to let it, or to dismiss his establishment. But he had taken a great fancy to a small place close upon the Great Western Railway, and almost exactly opposite the well-known county asylum at Hanwell. There he had established himself, having, by his own particular desire and arrangement, put himself under the regular surveillance of a most respectable elderly married couple, who acted, to all intents and purposes, as his regular keepers: and appears to have lived in great contentment and real happiness, dividing his time, as deposed by these faithful retainers, in putting the leading articles in the morning papers into comic verse, of which he had left volumes upon volumes of manuscript behind

him, and watching the passing trains, to every one of which he made a point of rushing to the end of his little lawn, and saluting with his handkerchief tied like a flag upon his walking stick. His greatest delight was to gain an admission into the asylum itself, as he sometimes did, through the principal Doctor of that establishment, who was his dearest friend, and there play long whist with some of the inmates, with many of whom he was most intimately acquainted. It further transpired that the two witnesses to the signature of the will in question were inmates of Hanwell at the time they had attested it, though both were since recovered, and again at large.

It was perfectly true that when the humour seized him, this (to put it in its mildest form) eccentric character would occasionally go, with his faithful servant attending him, up to London, and pay visits amongst his few friends, like any one else. On this point Messrs. Wiley and McKraft, though now antagonists and at daggers drawn upon any other question in the world, were ready to agree with a marvellous unanimity, and to swear to any amount that their ancient client was as competent to make a will or execute any other important deed as any individual in the world. Again and again did they, on both sides, do their best to shuffle off the ground on which

they found themselves thus unwillingly compelled to fight out their battle, and to shift the trial back again to the original point of dispute, as to whether Mr. Lambard has, or has not complied to the letter with the strange and unusual conditions on which his title to the inheritance of his forefathers was alleged to depend; but happily for justice, in vain. The absurd, and we have no hesitation in adding, insane will, was upset by the special jury; and most heartily do we congratulate the young squire of Kraxted Manor upon being thus firmly reinstated in his property, with the far less assailable title than that under which he has hitherto enjoyed it—that of being the heir-at-law to his grandfather, who has been pronounced by a British jury to have died insane and consequently intestate.

Having, in this extra notice of so extraordinary a story, already far exceeded all recognition of the limits which are ordinarily devoted to a subject of this kind, we have neither space nor inclination to trespass further on the patience of our readers' attention in this number, at least, to moralize upon, or draw any further deductions from, this complicated, and in some respects, though it may be no business of ours more pointedly to allude to that subject, disgracefully mismanaged affair, than by merely asking a simple question.

Now that young Mr. Lambard has been established

beyond all further doubt in the possession of his legally-inherited property, about which, if all those about him had been honest, there ought to have been no doubt at all; when all the motley crew of witnesses, eminent practitioners, quacks, lawyers, special jurymen, come for the settlement of their expenses, we should like to ask in four simple monosyllables—

WHO IS TO PAY?

CHAPTER XXXII.

DE GUSTIBUS NON DISPUTANDUM.

"In every day's experience, how many things there are constantly occurring, deaths, popular excitements, scandals, or even individual feelings, such as motives or tastes, which are quite unaccountable."

M. TAPPER'S *Commonplace Book.*

I TOOK an opportunity of asking Lambard one day—when I was down with him at his place, and we were talking over the trial, *àpropos* to the arrival of the new *Piccadilly* number, from which I have selected the above article—how it was that his best friend and ally, *Taraxacum,* had not been sought out and subpœnaed by either side as an important witness?

To tell the truth, I had been considerably disappointed at not seeing that queer character, of whom I had heard so much; certainly, next to the Professor, whom I did see in the unexpected disguise as described in the article, I had looked forward to meeting Mr. De Lyons with some curiosity and interest.

"It was not for want of trying for him," answered Lambard. "Did you not see him again and again advertised for, some two or three months since in the second column of the *Times,* requesting—

D. DE L., formerly of Bramton, and last heard of as connected with the house of Messrs. Weichkoff Zehewahlen and Co., of Dresden, to communicate with Mr. Keeholey, private information office, personally or by letter. All expenses from any distance to be amply re-imbursed.

"I heard a report some time since," he added, "that he had gone over to America, and my lawyer, Wyley, informed me one morning, while the trial was going on, that there was such a name, which was not a common one, mentioned by some newspaper correspondent as holding the commission of Major, I think he said, in the Federal army, but that he knew no more than that of him."

I have, I am aware, more than once in the course of these pages disclaimed all intention of putting my humble self forward. I catch myself, however, as I draw nearer to my wind-up, more often tempted to emerge from that well-intentioned retirement; but here it is merely to mention that I have another intimate friend, whose name, as you will not hear of him again before we take leave of one another altogether, it is scarcely worth while mentioning.

He is passionately devoted to music, and performs really very creditably on the piano. He occupies the rooms on the ground floor beneath my own, and I should

perhaps enjoy and appreciate his music more than I do, if he could only be prevailed upon to alter his usual hours of practice, which, commencing at about eleven P.M., generally continue until from half-past two to three A.M. every night, or rather morning, Sundays included.

One particular night he had been to the Opera, and had not commenced his practice until rather later than usual, and then he went to work at one peculiar air, over and over and over again, until I thought I should have really gone distracted—now slowly and softly, now fortissimo, then singing it, then whistling it with slight variations, but always the same tune, which he set running in my head, as I could only suppose it must be doing in his own, until at last I was driven to jump out of my warm bed, and, running down to his door, entreated him for pity's sake to desist.

He was a good-natured fellow, and only begging me to listen while he should only once more play through the most lovely new air that ever was composed by mortal man, then complied with my request, and let me get back to my bed with some chance of sleep. Even then, as he was himself undressing, I could hear him humming over the same air, until I began positively to loathe every note of it.

Next morning, while I was at breakfast, my musical

friend looked in under the pretence I believe of apologizing, but really, as I could see, to elicit my praise for his last night's performance. While he was even talking to me he was still mentally enjoying the air which had thus taken possession of him, as I could perceive by the imaginary piano accompaniment which his fingers were executing the whole time upon the edge of my table.

"Is it not a most wonderful air?" he asked. "There is something so excruciatingly captivating, so entirely new about it."

"New it is not," I replied, perhaps rather testily, "for I have heard my friend Frank Lambard whistle, and sing it too, a hundred times."

"Your friend, Frank Lambard, is no doubt a very wonderful fellow; but, as it happens, that tune came out for the first time, entirely new, last night, at the Opera. I never in my life before witnessed anything like the *furore* with which it was received. The whole house was crammed, and rose like one man from pit to gallery, in a frenzy of enthusiasm. I never, I say, saw or heard of anything like the reception the new *Prima Donna* received, and genuine too, mainly upon the strength of that song alone. Four times was it encored, and each time she seemed to put more power and excitement into her execution than

the last. She is a very handsome woman, is the star of the season, the *bella* Giuletta, though rather past her quite *première jeunesse*. I must positively have a stall this season, if I have to sell my last shirt studs to pay for it; for there has been nothing like Giuletta Sottonebbia here for years. As to your friend Frank Lambard, indeed! to look at him, he is just the sort of fellow that I should have imagined could never know one tune from another—couldn't find out the difference between 'God save the Queen' and 'Jim Crow.'" And he departed to his office in high dudgeon—though not, by the way, before he had had another half-hour's performance of the new tune upon his piano below.

He was quite borne out, however, as to the rage with which that tune, new or old as it might be, within even a few days, seemed to be taken up by the public in the same way as by himself.

On one particular morning every street-boy—as if by concerted arrangement—was whistling or singing that tune at the top of his voice; there was not an organ or German band which was not playing it. You might hear it in the most select Belgrave Square concerts—where each *artiste* was engaged at twenty guineas a song; or if you preferred, the more genial, though less refined, atmosphere of the Cider Cellars,

or even, as I was told, at every penny-gaff in St. Giles's, where it was nightly applauded and encored with the same enthusiasm. Every volunteer regiment marched out to that same spirit-stirring air; every quadrille band brought it in again half a dozen times over at the same ball, into their Lancer medleys, and every other kind of dance-music. From the highest to the lowest, every one you met was singing, whistling, or playing it—those who could not reproduce it in any of those forms, were talking about that wonderful new tune; and yet I still stuck to my assertion, that I had heard my friend Frank Lambard whistle it over hundreds of times, months before—whenever he was considering anything earnestly, or more particularly if anything had occurred to bother him.

Before the end of that season—almost before the popularity of that wonderful new tune had begun to pass off—an additional interest arose in connexion with it, which set the whole town again frantic with excitement and delight. The magnificent new *prima donna* one fine morning eloped with a married man, who had deserted his own wife, and started off, taking with him all her jewellery, and all the remains of her private fortune which he had not already dissipated. They were said to have gone straight off for California, or Vancouver's Island—or somewhere in those

directions. There were, of course, all sorts of reports and different stories about the hero of this delicious piece of scandal. At every club in London there were, at least, a dozen members, each of whom had the very best possible authority for knowing all about it, and each would insist upon giving a totally different version of the particulars, all talking at the same time; and yet no two people could even agree as to the party's right name. No one seemed to know anything about him personally, except one fact upon which all were agreed, and that was—that he was a dwarf, the most ill-conditioned, malignant specimen of humanity in London.

Lambard, who happened to be up in town, came in, in immense spirits about it. "You have heard this last escapade of Gorles?" he said.

"Thank God! the country in general, and I myself in particular, will be henceforth for ever rid of that little demon! I feel that I can go now and make the acquaintance of his wife, whom he has so basely deserted; she is my nearest relation, you know, and I feel that I ought to do something for her, for they say she is left in positive destitution. Do you think I ought to introduce myself, by writing to congratulate her?"

I declined to give any advice on so delicate a

question. Frank was in one of his rattling humours and so ran on.

"Fancy that woman—you know of course that she is his old flame, that used to be at Florence. I trust she will lead the wicked beggar a precious life of it! The only possible motive that I can conceive for the extraordinary step she has taken, is a concentration of the most dire revenge; or why on earth should any woman, who at her age has made the most successful *début* on the stage that is remembered for years, fling herself, and every chance away, upon a deformed little monster, who so many years ago had not only basely deserted, but publicly insulted her?

"The force of mesmeric affinity between two persons is sometimes unbounded, and beyond all conception inexplicable, but my solution to the riddle, perhaps because I hope it, is a hidden motive of vengeance—vengeance most dire!"

My musical friend from beneath had dropped in, and begging to differ, though not quite in the same contemptuous tones with which he had, on a former occasion, treated Lambard's opinion behind his back, was just offering his particular views of the matter, when they were unfortunately interrupted by the loud grunts of a barrel organ in the street below, playing—as he was now pleased to call it—that cursed

stale tune, which not six weeks before had driven him into such ecstacies of delight.

"It never somehow has grown stale to me, though I have known it these twelve years," remarked Lambard, innocently, "and also knew the German gentleman very well, who originally composed it."

My musical friend either did not, or pretended not to hear the remark, but reverting to the original topic of our conversation, favoured us with the philosophic generalism, that it was, after all, in vain seeking after motives in women, since there was no sort of accounting for any of the tastes which that sex will show, or what they will do in the case of love or matrimony.

"Nor the other sex either," I might with reason have added to the above axiom, if I could only have been *clairvoyant* enough to have foreseen, or even dreamt, that within that day six months, Frank Lambard would, in spite of all remonstrances of his Mother and other relations, and the most plain-spoken representations of his best friends, have actually married his own cousin, Mrs. Gorles, or Miss Duffa, which name and style the lady had again resumed, after having, by the kind assistance of the learned and Right Honourable Sir J. P. Wilde, found herself legally released, having, without the slightest blemish on her

own character, obtained her divorce from her disreputable husband, Melchior Gorles.

It was a strange step to take on Frank's part, there is no denying; and yet when I went down to pay them a visit at Kraxted Manor, nothing could exceed the happiness and pride with which he seemed to have taken a fresh start in life as a married man.

The lady, though no longer very young, is strikingly handsome, perhaps more so, I should fancy, than when a girl, with an open-hearted, pleasant style of manner, and highly accomplished.

Lambard himself one evening, as we were sitting over the fire in his snug smoking-room, gave me a most singular supplementary reason for the choice he had made.

"When I went that time to see if I could do anything for poor Carry in her distress, I found that I had marked her before, in church, and in the park, and other places, without having a notion that she was my own cousin, or who she was. I had admired her immensely, and bought that picture that hangs up there over the mantelpiece, because I fancied it was like my unknown beauty.

"When I at last found out who she was, and came to know her, I very soon felt sure that she would make

just the wife to suit me in a thousand ways; but what really clenched the matter was, I found that those rascally lawyers of hers, or rather her late husband's, were preparing to move for a new trial against my property, on the ground of misdirection on the part of the judge; and as Carry would come in for the place if they succeeded in ousting me, even if she hadn't suited me to a T in every other respect, I think I would still have done what I have done, for the mere pleasure of selling them. And between ourselves, I will give you my honour, that though she was married all those years to that little wretch, of whom, even now more than ever, I feel that I can hardly bear to think, —let alone talk about—that she was never anything to him but his wife in name only.

"The poor girl, left as she was an orphan without a single friend in the world, and only too glad of any chance of escape from an old brute of a governess, who led her a most awful life, rashly consented to take a husband whom she had never seen, but in whose eyes her eight thousand pounds, besides the chances of supplanting myself in my property here at Kraxted, which were represented, and, indeed, fully believed in by his scoundrel of a relation, old McKraft, to be a perfect certainty, were her main and principal attractions.

"My poor Father had, as her guardian, taken good

care to tie up her fortune securely in her own power—leaving it to herself, however, to make a settlement on her husband for his life, if after marriage she should think fit to do so; of this precaution, Gorles, it seems, was not fully aware until the very morning of their marriage—but fell into a most fearful rage at the discovery, and spoke and behaved most atrociously even before they had arrived at Dover, whither they had set out to spend their honeymoon.

"Intensely disgusted at his disgraceful language and conduct, and being a high-spirited girl as she was, she offered him, in so many words, to sign an agreement of separation that very day—by which she was to make over to him two-thirds of her fortune, on condition that they should at once arrange to live together as strangers only, in the same *ménage*, but never as man and wife.

"He was mean enough to accept the settlement thus proposed; and though they travelled together, and continued—when they returned to England—to live ostensibly under the same roof, she kept him from first to last strictly to his compact.

"I do not much care who believes this or not—I am satisfied," continued Frank Lambard, after a few more whiffs of his cigar; "I am perfectly happy, and

as long as I am so, and quite contented with what better luck than usual has at last brought me, I cannot see what possible business it can be of any one else in the world."

THE END.

LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS, CHANDOS STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN'S PUBLICATIONS.

ATTRACTIVE NEW BOOKS.

NEW BOOK BY THE "ENGLISH GUSTAVE DORÉ."—COMPANION TO THE "HATCHET THROWERS."

This day, 4to, Illustrations, coloured, 7*s.* 6*d.*; plain, 5*s.*

LEGENDS OF SAVAGE LIFE. By JAMES GREENWOOD, the famous Author of "A Night in a Workhouse." With 36 inimitably droll Illustrations drawn and coloured by ERNEST GRISET, the "English Gustave Doré."

"Readers who found amusement in the 'Hatchet Throwers' will not regret any acquaintance they may form with this comical work. The pictures are among the most surprising which have come from this artist's pencil."

COMPANION VOLUME TO "LEECH'S PICTURES."

This day, oblong 4to, a handsome volume, half-morocco, price 12*s.*

SEYMOUR'S SKETCHES. The Book of Cockney Sports, Whims, and Oddities. Nearly 200 highly amusing Illustrations.

*** A reissue of the famous pictorial comicalities which were so popular thirty years ago. The volume is admirably adapted for a table-book, and the pictures will doubtless again meet with that popularity which was extended towards them when the artist projected with Mr. Dickens the famous "Pickwick Papers."

"Will be the most popular of all the Amusing Books issued this Year."

"AN AWFULLY JOLLY BOOK" FOR PARTIES.

This day, on toned paper, printed by CLAY, 7*s.* 6*d.*

PUNIANA; or, Thoughts Wise and Other-wise. The best Book of Riddles and Puns ever formed. Collected and edited by the Hon. HUGH ROWLEY. With nearly 100 exquisitely fanciful Drawings. In beautiful cloth binding, gilt edges, with Picture by Gustave Doré, printed in colours, and inlaid in cover.

"It contains nearly 3000 of the best Riddles, and about twice that number of the most outrageous Puns," and it is believed will prove to be "the most popular of all the Christmas books issued this year."

A THIRD EDITION, price 7*s.* 6*d.*, of

HISTORY OF SIGN-BOARDS.

From the *Times* review of three columns.

"It is not fair on the part of a reviewer to pick the plums out of an author's book, thus filching away his cream, and leaving little but skim milk remaining; but, even if we were ever so maliciously inclined, we could not, in the present instance, pick out all Messrs. Larwood and Hotten's plums, because the good things are so numerous as to defy the most wholesale depredation."

THE NEW AND VERY POPULAR EDITION OF

WAVERLEY NOVELS. In crown 8vo, 200 pages, **price 6d.** each.

GUY MANNERING. IVANHOE. THE ANTIQUARY.

Also, THIRD EDITIONS of

ROB ROY.	**KENILWORTH.**	**THE PIRATE.**
WAVERLEY.	**OLD MORTALITY.**	**THE MONASTERY.**

*** **Where any difficulty occurs in the supply, postage stamps may be remitted direct to the undersigned, who will forward per return. The name of the Publisher MUST IN ALL CASES be given.**

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, *Publisher, 74 and 75, Piccadilly, London.*

MR. SWINBURNE'S "POEMS AND BALLADS."

NOTICE.—The publisher begs to inform the very many persons who have inquired after this remarkable Work that copies may now be obtained at all Booksellers, price 9s.

MR. SWINBURNE'S NOTES on his POEMS and on the REVIEWS which have appeared upon them, is now ready, price 1s.

ATALANTA IN CALYDON. By ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE. 6s.

CHASTELARD: a Tragedy. By A. C. SWINBURNE. 7s.

ESSAYS on BLAKE, the ARTIST. (In preparation.)

ROSSETTI'S CRITICISM on SWINBURNE'S "POEMS." 3s. 6d.

THE MOST APPROPRIATE CHRISTIAN GIFT-BOOK.

This day, in small 4to, with very beautiful floriated borders, in the Renaissance style.

SONGS OF THE NATIVITY. An entirely new collection of Christian Carols, including some never before given in any collection. With Music to the more popular. Edited by W. H. HUSK, Librarian to the Sacred Harmonic Society. In charmingly appropriate cloth, gilt, and admirably adapted for binding in antique calf or morocco, 12s. 6d.

The following Book is sure to become a widely popular one.

"IT DOES FOR WINCHESTER WHAT 'TOM BROWN' DID FOR RUGBY."

This day, crown 8vo, handsomely printed, 7s. 6d.

SCHOOL LIFE AT WINCHESTER; or, The Reminiscences of a Winchester Junior. By the Author of the "Log of the Water Lily." With numerous Illustrations, exquisitely coloured after the original drawings.

NEW BOOK OF POPULAR HUMOUR.

This day, crown 8vo, handsomely printed, toned paper, 3s. 6d.

WIT AND HUMOUR: Poems by the "Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table." "A volume of delightfully humorous poems, very similar to the mirthful verses of Tom Hood. Readers will not be disappointed with this work."

ANGLICAN CHURCH ORNAMENTS.

This day, thick 8vo, with Illustrations, price 15s.

ENGLISH CHURCH FURNITURE, ORNAMENTS, and DECORATIONS, at the Period of the Reformation. Edited by ED. PEACOCK, F.S.A.

"Very curious as showing what articles of church furniture were in those days considered to be idolatrous or unnecessary. The work, of which only a limited number has been printed, is of the highest interest to those who take part in the present Ritual discussion."—*See Reviews in the Religious Journals.*

*** Where any difficulty occurs in the supply, postage stamps may be remitted direct to the undersigned, who will forward per return. The name of the Publisher MUST IN ALL CASES be given.

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, *Publisher, 74 and 75, Piccadilly, London.*

HECKMAN
BINDERY INC.
OCT 96
Bound -To -Please® N. MANCHESTER, INDIANA 46962

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 005649741